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'The Vivisectionist of Women'

by G. Vere Tyler

The complete novelette in this
number



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THE SMART SET

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CONTENTS

PARADISE LOST	Otis Peabody Swift	1
FOR BOB, A DOG	David Morton	2
THE VIVISECTIONIST OF WOMEN (complete novelette)	G. Vere Tyler	3
MY LOVE	Alice King	34
THE DIARY OF A SKELETON	Robert McBlair	35
THE BALLET RUSSE IN EAST SEVENTY- SIXTH STREET	Richard Fletcher	41
SONGS OF HIS LADY	John McClure	48
THE MANAGER	Russell D. Janney	49
THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T QUIT HER JOB	Frank R. Adams	63
THE JOKER	Hilary Goode Richardson	70
BEAUTY LIKE A BIRD	Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff	70
THE WHIMSICAL ADVENTURE	Paul Hervey Fox	71
PROSE LIBRE	Sidney L. Hydeman	80
THE NEW MOON	Sara Teasdale	80
GOOD-BY (one-act play)	Jules Renard	81
NARCOSIS BY ETHYL ALCOHOL (essay)	O. F. Howard & Gerald Mygatt	95
HER DAY OF DAYS	Mary Adams Wakeman	101
THE LITTLE BOAT	Marguerite O. B. Wilkinson	104
VENUS OR VALKYR?	James Huneker	105
THE POMEGRANATE	Morris Gilbert	113
THE COLOR OF CAIRO	Achmed Abdullah	117
A PERFECTLY NATURAL MAN	Max Saher	125
LOST	James Hay, Jr.	128
THE LOVE FOOL	Archie Bell	129
THE RECTOR	Lizette Woodworth Reese	135
LOVE	Helen Woljeska	136
PAULINE AND THE UPLIFT	Van Vechten Hostetter	137
ROAD SONGS	Odell Sheppard	139
HELP!	Winthrop Parkhurst	140
LE CANTONNIER (in the French)	Emile Delta	141
THE DRAMATIC CRITIC AND THE UNDRAMATIC THEATER	George Jean Nathan	143
A SOUL'S ADVENTURES	H. L. Mencken	150
IN THE SHOPS OF THE SMART SET		157

AND

A HUNDRED BURLESQUES, EPIGRAMS, POEMS, SHORT SATIRES, ETC.

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THE SMART SET

Always interesting; usually clever; sometimes brilliant

PARADISE LOST

By Otis Peabody Swift

THE Reverend Archibald Abraham Sprague was cold. The wind of the outer spaces whistled by him and chilled his heart, and as he drew his pink and blue nightshirt close across his narrow chest, the Reverend Archibald sighed. Verily, Heaven was hard to attain.

For he was dead. Far, far behind him the earth sparkled in the firmament, and above his head glowed the milky way, while all about the flickering blue, white lights of blessed souls whirled along with him on the way to Heaven. At least he hoped it was Heaven, but in his heart he wasn't very sure, for once a passing soul had brushed his own, and he had recognized Old Bill Buckley by a whiff of the Sailor's Plug he always chewed. And Old Bill had been a very sinful man, who cut hay on Sunday and often played poker all night in the back room of Ed Trimball's saloon. . . .

Then, too, the Reverend Archibald felt that his own crossing over hadn't been quite as decorous as it might have been. He had taken too many glasses of the excellent port at Squire Browne's

that evening, and on the way home the streets had seemed very uneven, and he had slipped on the stone steps of the Parsonage, and when he tried to crawl up on his hands and knees had tumbled through an eternity of time until he found himself here.

But as he pondered all fears were lost, for he stood before a great jeweled gate and the good Saint Peter, clad in a green turban and long, flowing robes, was waiting to welcome him home. A warm glow came from the open portals, and he hurried through, glad to escape from the bitter cold without. He was in a great forest, the Garden of Eden, perhaps, where the bright tropic sunlight drifted down through the dark green foliage of giant palm trees. Golden springs laughed in the leafy glades, and heaps of dates and pomegranates lay on the moss among beds of luxuriant ferns. The air was heavy with soft perfumes, and in the shade of a great vine hung with luscious grapes the Reverend Archibald found a cool tent of camel skins. It was lined with rich purple cloth, and reclining on green cushions and beautiful Persian

carpets Archibald rested and thought that God was good to the just.

He slept, but the soft touch of a gentle hand awoke him, and bending over him was a houri fairer than any that ever graced the harem of the Sultan. Her color was a rich golden brown, and long black lashes swept her deep brown eyes. Her teeth were rows of dazzling pearls, her cheeks more red than the blossoms of the passion flower, and her breasts were twin golden moons of the Orient. She was clad only in a long, filmy gauze veil which fell loosely over the curves of her perfect figure, and she sat beside the Reverend Archibald and stroked his thin white hair.

Then from afar came the measured beat of a tom-tom, booming nearer and nearer; and into the tent glided a sinuous line of dancing girls who swayed to the rhythmic beat of the drum. They were more beautiful than the silver stars of sunset, and were dressed as the first houris except that they did not wear the veil.

As they danced the twilight darkened, and suddenly from above the palm trees came a deep voice intoning the call of the faithful:

"Allah y Allah—There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His Prophet." And stretched out on the cushions the Reverend Archibald smiled. He was very happy, *but he had landed in the wrong Heaven!*

* * *

It was cold and the wind of the outer spaces chilled his heart. In the dim light of early morning the Reverend Archibald Abraham Sprague sprawled on the gravel walk at the foot of the Parsonage steps and muttered fiercely at the milkman, who was shaking him into sensibility. From an upper window protruded the head of Minerva, his spouse, bristling with curl papers and indignation.

"Ah, me," murmured the Reverend Archibald, "the mortal flesh is but a burden. Would that I were dead again, and in Heaven with the blessed!"



FOR BOB, A DOG

By David Morton

(*In Memoriam*)

YOU who would never leave us to our sleeping,
But ever nosed us out of bed to play,
How can we ever think of you as keeping
So strangely still, as stirless as the clay?
We cannot think you dead to games and laughter:
Surely, in some bright place beyond the sun,
Girls race and play, and you go racing after,
And lie across their feet when games are done.

Who knows, but in our separate times and places,
When we have slept the last, last sleep away,
You yet may come, your nose against our faces,
And wake us to our bright, immortal play.—
And if you startle us with rude surprise,
You'll plead—and win—forgiveness with those eyes.



THE VIVISECTIONIST OF WOMEN

By G. Vere Tyler

OF other authors of prose fiction, whether male or female, native or exotic, Mr. Hawthorne Hilliard made it a rule to say nothing that was not agreeable, and to think nothing that was not generous. There was in him, indeed, no trace whatever of the actor, the tenor, the Broadway dramatist, the prima donna in pantaloons. He stood clearly above the feline jealousies that so often afflict the gifted, and viewed them in others with sentiments almost indistinguishable from a god-like compassion. If, rolling his eye across the passionate book reviews in the *New York Times*, he came upon a critical hymn to some new Balzac out of the Chicago cattle-pens, or to some freshly hatched Charlotte Brontë from Vassar or the East Side, or to some late recruit to the tear-squeezing hosts of Garden City—if, with his rolls and coffee, he was greeted from the printed page by such huzzahs, they found a tolerant echo in his own spirit.

On occasion, as the records show, he even went so far as to play cheer leader himself. Who was the first American to formulate in written characters the awful name of Stanislaus Przybyszewski, the Polish Arnold Bennett? Your ready answer, I daresay, will be James Gibbons Huneker, but it is not so. Huneker was pursuing phantasms along the Rhine; it was Hawthorne Hilliard who discovered Przybyszewski in an odd number of *Die Insel*, and communicated his bearings and house marks to the Boston *Transcript*, as a search of the files of 1907 will show. It was Hilliard, again, who did for the *Atlantic Monthly* its three famous articles

on the women novelists of the United States—a series long since taken into the body of permanent American criticism. And it was Hilliard, to go no further, who sat as chairman of a committee which presented a laurel wreath to W. J. Locke on his memorable arrival off Sandy Hook, and who contributed a thousand dollars to a fund for an equestrian statue to J. Fenimore Cooper, and who sent the *New York Sun* a classical philippic (since thrice reprinted in pamphlet form) when the late Anthony Comstock sought to jail a publisher for publishing a new edition (pirated, but beautifully bound) of *Emile Zola*. . . .

I establish, I hope, the hearty kindness of the man, and his eagerness to see others get on. That eagerness, of course, was not purely altruistic and crazy; he was more than a mere Quixote. Down at the bottom of his soul, I make no doubt, there was a sub-conscious feeling, and perhaps even a conscious one, that the success of these brothers and sisters of letters was beneficial to his own fame, if only by reason of the superior respectability that it fastened upon the craft of authorship, and the augmentation of public interest that it engendered. As novel-writing rose in the world, it must be plain, Hawthorne Hilliard himself rose, and in the more material usufructs as well as in dignity and position.

Beside, these rivals in the craft were, after all, less directly his rivals than a superficial consideration of the matter would lead one to believe, for Hawthorne Hilliard was not a general practitioner in fiction, but a specialist, and

THE VIVISECTIONIST OF WOMEN

within the field of his specialty there was no one to challenge him, and few even to follow him. He did not deal with the dispersed and complex transactions which make up the substance of modern fiction; he was wholly free from the influence of any recognizable social theory, or of any ethical purpose, or of any esthetic school; he cherished no hope of depicting, upon a grand scale, mankind's struggle upward toward the light; he was not a reformer, nor a politician, nor an historian. No; Hawthorne Hilliard left all such diverse and baffling matters to authors of a more expansive aspiration. His one single and inexhaustible subject was the soul of woman in Christendom, and all his books had to do with the reactions of that soul to the passion of love. In a word, his specialty was not only woman, but woman in her narrowly erotic aspects and phases, and to that specialty, in book after book of the subtlest observation and most delicate ratiocination, he devoted all the powers of his genius.

A lady critic on the staff of the *Chicago Tribune* put his intention and his manner into a sentence so felicitous that it has colored all serious discussion of him ever since. "He depicts his women," she said, "with a pen so brilliant that whatever he writes makes an indelible record upon the intelligent reader's mind, like a diamond cutting glass." His writing, it need not be said, was frank; he told the truth as he saw it, simply and unemotionally; he did not hesitate, if his inquiry led him that way, at the pathological. But under it all there was a scientific honesty, a meticulous determination to put it down as it actually was, a dreiserian relentlessness of curiosity, which disarmed all dissent and disquiet. The worst that could ever be justly said of his portraits was that such truth-telling was so inordinately cruel as to be almost unbearable; no one, not even the most prudish, ever ventured to dispute the essential integrity of the picture.

And no wonder! What Hawthorne

Hilliard wrote, indeed, was no more and no less than what he definitely and certainly knew. For every woman in his books there had been a woman in real life—nay, in his own life—and that woman he had studied at the closest ranges conceivable, and with the utmost fixity of attention. To put it bluntly, he reduced women, through the medium of his own personal charm, to a condition of emotional perturbation bordering upon the irresponsible, and having thus, as it were, stripped them to the bone, he stood over them like some inexorable anatomist, calmly taking notes. He picked his subjects as a hypnotist might have done, but whereas a hypnotist controls the actions of those under his influence, directing them in all they do, Hilliard merely started the process of psychical unfolding. Once he had started it, what ensued came out of the secret depths of their own personalities, and Hilliard himself was no more than a recorder.

Thus vivisected, they gave him the inner knowledge of woman's soul that he sought, and that he poured so lavishly into his books. While his study of a selected subject was in progress he made every effort, like a physiologist in the laboratory, to shut off all external distractions. He desired to be free to note the most elusive manifestation as it arose, and he desired that the woman under observation be emancipated from every influence other than his own. Into an atmosphere of his own creation and saturated with his own temperament he transplanted a healthy blossom, and watched it unfold—or wither. The slower the process, the stronger the resistance offered, the more forms and colors the flower showed during the period of its development, and the more valuable the data obtained. Sometimes, in the case of a woman of unusual mentality, he was able to inoculate her, as it were, with something of his own fine imagination, and to make her return it to him effeminated. This he considered the limit of his achievement.

and perhaps of all possible achievement in the science he pursued.

He regarded himself as too coldly analytical, too much dominated by awareness, too much the surgeon at work, ever to fall a victim to his own inquiries. He allowed himself little more than a sympathetic friendliness, a somewhat vague simulation of what he could not actually feel. Occasionally, to check phenomena which threatened to be inconvenient, he administered an anesthetic in the form of a judicious kiss, or perhaps (in rare cases) of something resembling an embrace. But usually he held himself scientifically aloof, for to be merciless to the patient was an essential article of his creed. His cruelties, if so they must be considered, he thought of as far less reprehensible than many which served the world for mere pastime. He, at least, was no idler and waster; what passed before him, even though it might be reckoned as suffering, was at least of value in two ways, for it enriched both the science of psychology and the art of literature. Every one of his books, he felt, was a permanent contribution to human knowledge, and not only to human knowledge, but also to the sense of the beautiful. He knew his business, and he knew that he knew it.

The voice of ignorance and stupidity, of course, was often raised against him, but the objections of those who saw in him a mere story-teller, with an occasional leaning toward the salacious, had no influence upon him whatever, and seldom even interested him. One self-constituted critic, writing in a periodical affecting smartness, often attacked him with ridicule, and there were feeble attempts in the same direction by others. This critic used to say of him that he had as many ways of dishing up women as a cook had of serving potatoes. If he served one in cream the next was sure to be hashed brown. They came forth in their jackets and out of their jackets, boiled, baked, fried, with onions, and as Saratoga chips. Hilliard never permitted such unfriendly

jocosities to move him from his purpose. The subject that was engrossing him was not criticism, but women. He studied women with the unappeasable curiosity of a Darwin, the implacable singleness of aim of a Galileo. He used up women as lavishly as a biologist uses up rabbits and guinea-pigs—used them up and discarded them. Once a book was finished, the woman who stood forth from it so brilliantly was no longer of any concern to him. He packed her off. He sent her about her business. He was not moved by her sentimentalities.

For there was always another waiting. Women were drawn to him as to some astoundingly hideous and blood-thirsty god of heathendom. They sought him out in response to an impulse as blind as that of a moth flying toward a flame. Their native docility and yearning to be ruled, welling up through the bogus freedom of the age, led them to him with infallible instinct. There was a subtle and insidious excitement, even for the most alert of them, in his very presence. They felt, suddenly, as if they were naked; it was a shock that was yet strangely mingled with fascination. Though one might fancy him repelling them, at least momentarily, by his arctic aloofness, his air of detachment, his impregnable masculinity, he nevertheless charmed them almost unanimously by certain qualities that his manner could not conceal—his deep, resonant voice, his well-turned-out, aristocratic appearance, the erectness of his carriage, the way he used his hands in speaking, a certain trick of pursing his lips. There was something unmistakably exotic about him; he suggested the American a good deal less than the cultivated Latin or Slav; one could imagine him in the Bois of a fine afternoon, or cantering down Rotten Row, but surely not voyaging upon a Fifth avenue bus or feeding the squirrels in Central Park. It was almost with a sense of disappointment that one failed to discover any suggestion of foreign accent in his speech. He spoke, indeed, the sound,

mellifluous English of Columbus, Ohio, his birthplace.

As I say, there was no lack of women for Hawthorne Hilliard's investigations, nor did a suitable subject, once found, resist recruitment with any degree of determination. And yet, to be sure, what amounted to a hiatus sometimes separated one inquiry from the other, and during such intervals it was Hilliard's habit to loaf and invite his soul—sometimes in Europe (that, of course, was before the present deplorable war), sometimes at Aiken or the White Sulphur (never at such vulgar holes as Newport and Lenox), and sometimes in New York, the city of his usual residence and the place of his chief labors. This loafing he would keep up until it wearied him, or the impulse to write became compelling. Then he would quietly choose a new subject, enter upon his psychical vivisections, and so accumulate his notes and impressions for his next book. . . .

It was thus that he turned back to his task in life one pleasant morning in October. He had finished a masterpiece in the Spring, and had rested in Maine, superbly celibate, indifferent and at ease, while the critics snorted and sweated over it during the long, hot days of Summer. Now, refreshed and ready for work again, he crossed Fifth avenue at Forty-second street on his way to his barber in the Belmont Hotel. The notion stole upon him unawares, and with great suddenness. His foot, indeed, was actually in the air, midway in a step, when the thought struck him: "To-morrow it will be time for me to begin my next book." His sub-consciousness answered at once with a question: Who? Whom? . . . For the first time in his life Hawthorne Hilliard had no answer ready. His thoughts dwelt lightly upon various impossible shes. . . . He would have to find the woman first. . . .

II

THE advocates of the thought transference hypothesis bring forth many

curious evidences and arguments in support of their faith in it. I report only a simple fact, and offer no opinion. It is this: that on the very day which saw Hawthorne Hilliard cross Fifth avenue at Forty-second street in the manner just described, a tall, attractive girl named Miriam Reese, also an author, stood upon a street corner in the far-distant Southern city of her birth, considering somewhat gloomily what she was to do with herself, make of herself. The world she had known in her earlier years, and that, in a physical sense, she still lived in, had suddenly withered and faded before her eyes. She felt herself quite out of it. It afflicted her with a sense of strangeness, of lack of understanding, almost of hostility. She could scarcely breathe its air. . . . Standing there on that balmy corner (for October, in Georgia, is still Summer), idly watching two negro boys struggling grotesquely with a heavy freezer of ice-cream, she found her discontent suddenly stiffening into determination. She was tired of Atlanta, and tired of being tired. She would put an end to an impossible situation. She would pack her laces and fineries and go to New York. . . .

Scoffers, of course, will glibly explain this coincidence. In deference to them let it be admitted that Miriam Reese had herself just written a book and that she was vibrant with the creator's joy. To her this brain-child of hers seemed a living, sentient thing. She held the manuscript upon her lap, in her hands, pressed it to her breast, and smiled rapturously upon it as a mother when her first babe is laid in her arms. Then, as time sped during the period of her indecision as to what, precisely, it would be best to do with this new wonder she had brought into the world, it seemed to grow, and develop in power, and almost she could feel it breathe. She had had the manuscript bound in scarlet leather, and that glowing investiture she regarded as a costume in which it was to make its bow, like a new star of the opera, to its predestined public. She saw the dis-

cerning astounded by this new wonder, as it had, on the day of its completion, astounded her. She saw it in print, in a new and far more ornate cover, rising magnificently from the book-counters. The thought of this splendid binding excited her strangely. It was a thing of beauty that would be reproduced a hundred thousand times, thus giving joy and employment to vast multitudes. In this she beheld herself, somewhat fantastically, as a philanthropist.

Always the success of her book was an assured fact, so assured that she had only to think of it to laugh aloud, clap her hands or dance about the room. Already she could see it in the hands of the hurrying thousands, not only in her own city, but in all the great cities of America. She saw people bending over it almost in awe in the stores, and wondering about the famous author; she saw them buying it at railroad stations, devouring it in the subways and surface cars, even forgetting their stations or the streets leading to their homes. She heard it discussed in *salons*, which her imagination made magnificent beyond words, at the dinner tables of the *élite*, at studio teas. In the literary columns of the great dailies and literary magazines, of the *Bookman*, the *Dial*, the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *Atlanta Constitution*, she saw it and herself as leading topics. And into her mind there crept not one single doubt. The thing *was*, just as she was, and when had she not controlled others, focused attention on herself, and swept everything her way? Had she not ever been acknowledged a resplendent, incomparable personality, and was not this book her living, breathing self in another form? Every fibre in her being was woven into it; every impression that had been made upon her from childhood glowed or smouldered or sparkled upon its pages.

The self-confidence born of this splendid egotism was not altogether unwarranted. In a day of feminine unrest Miriam Reese was by natural heritage what other women were struggling to be, while in appearance she

was a triumph of all that was most charming and admirable in femininity. Her chestnut-colored hair, a little coarse, and with a suggestion of a wave, seemed to throw off light. It caught the beholder's attention in a dazzling way, and then instantly the large blue-grey, strangely pensive eyes melted him into a dream. A passionate, somewhat sensuous creature, unafraid of herself or others, and from that standpoint alone wonderful, Miriam knew the value of her own charm, and did not neglect the use of it.

Orphaned at an early age, she had continued to live alone in the home she was born in and had inherited. Her manner of living was so open and so frank that what she did was not questioned, even in that old-fashioned Southern city. Neither sanction nor sympathy was necessary to her heroic temperament. Her passion was to reign. Her smile, a radiant smile, her voice, a musical voice, her cultivated arrogance and her financial independence rendered this easy.

As to men, they were lesser beings created for the sole purpose of ministering to and serving women, and in particular, this woman. Pride in her own superiority had protected her from bitter experiences. What she expected of man was a divine revelation of her own being. Beyond that he was of no importance.

III

JUST as she had never been overpowered by the wonder of God's world, Miriam was not overpowered by the artificial one of man's contrivance—New York. She was merely excited by it and thrilled. It was wonderful, far more wonderful than she had anticipated, but she also was wonderful, and as such distinctly a part of any vaster wonder.

A few days at a hotel near the Pennsylvania Terminal, a delivered letter of introduction to the president of a prominent woman's club, and she had been advised of delightful quarters in

a large and fashionable hotel in the very heart of New York, where an entire floor was devoted exclusively to women. This floor, embodying what to her was a most unique idea, had its own little library, reading and writing rooms, where tea was served. Energetic "advanced" women passed one another, it seemed to her somewhat aggressively, in the halls, or met in one or other of the charming little reception rooms, and conversed with as much seriousness as the men of her own country lavished upon the abysmal riddles of politics and trade. This profound seriousness of all the women about her appealed almost extravagantly to her imagination, and filled her with a sense of the revolutionary and inspiring. It was as if she had been suddenly admitted to a feminine senate-house, and made privy to its most secret councils. . . .

Having, in a measure, accustomed herself to the vast din and confusion of the great city, Miriam spent several days driving about in taxicabs, making herself familiar with its marvels. She visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art and went through its galleries meticulously, catalogue in hand. She ascended to the top of the Singer tower. She saw the latest plays by the reigning Sardous and Augiers of Broadway. She went down to Wall street and observed the maniacal cavortings of the curb brokers. She viewed the mammoth stumps of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. She motored along Riverside Drive. She saw Fifth avenue from the top of a 'bus. She dined at the Brevoort, lunched at Sherry's, supped at half a dozen of the gaudy eating-houses along Broadway. She sipped a furtive cocktail at the ladies' bar of the Beaux-Arts. She peeped into Jack's. She attended a lecture on the double standard of morality. She read daily, with a provincial's amazement, the *Evening Journal*, and with even more amazement, the *Evening Post*. She saw the homes of Andrew Carnegie, J. Pierpont Morgan and John D. Rockefeller *filis*. A waiter in a Forty-third street restaurant pointed

out to her Diamond Jim Brady, John Drew, Robert W. Chambers, George Ade, George M. Cohan and Mary Garden. She heard "Il Trovatore," "Parsifal" and "Der Rosenkavalier" at the Metropolitan Opera House. She was in three taxicab accidents. She had her pocket picked. She was threatened by a policeman for stopping to look into a jeweler's window in Broadway near the *Herald* office.

The shops, of course, occupied much of her time. She visited them all, from the immense barns in which bargains are the lure to the tiny little shops off Fifth avenue which hold out the charm of exclusiveness. She was not unfamiliar with the reigning fashions, despite her residence in Atlanta, for she had long done most of her buying by mail, and was well received in several very ornate shops when she introduced herself. With the proprietress of one of these shops, a Mme. Molldune, she quickly came upon friendly terms, and the two more than once had tea together at the Knickerbocker. Miriam had money in her purse and could afford to buy whatever she wanted. More, she was in an expansive, buying mood, for was not her novel, as it were, preparing for rehearsal? Her blood leaped gladly in her veins. She was full of a subtle and powerful stimulation. Her hotel room became overcrowded with packages. Her bank balance, as substantial as it was, showed signs of punishment. . . .

The one thing that puzzled her so far was that the women she came into contact with at her hotel resisted falling to the charms of her personality. They were not eager to crown her, as had always been the case at home, queen of their circle, and it surprised her that those far less endowed, those, it seemed to her scarcely endowed at all, were fighting, also, for recognition, a place. There were moments when she saw invisible sabers flashing and heard silent pistol shots, felt herself in the midst of a battle. She was rather confused by this, and by the curious, distrustful glances that fell upon her, the manner

in which she was warned not to press forward too far, or assert herself beyond a given point. In these moments she would retire to her room and stand palpitating, a little angered, yet all the more determined. Her life had been spent, so to speak, unarmed; here she was one of a regiment, armed *cap-à-pie*, a regiment in which personal ambition was so strong that to become a leader one must move through fire. She did not resent this, however, any more than she had resented the great overwhelming city. It was fine to be in a fight, a fight in which she would simply sweep them out of the way and stand above them all, throwing her banner to the breeze! She would have them, these clever, suspicious, metallic, *fin-de-siècle* women, at her feet. Wait until her book was out! . . .

There was something magnificent about her attitude, about all this ecstasy, this straightforward march into glory.

IV

At the end of three weeks she felt prepared to face the publisher she had selected to bring out her book.

He had printed a novel called "Miriam" that had, in a way, provoked her own. It was the story of a woman not unlike what she felt herself to be, and the tragic end of that woman had inspired her to create a heroine, herself, who would, by the sheer force of her own personality, frustrate such a catastrophic destiny.

At the very moment of her palpitating entrance (she was made doubly charming by this very palpitation), another author, this time a man, seated himself at the long table in the publisher's waiting-room, and idly turned the pages of a popular magazine. He was, one could see at a glance, in no hurry. He had dropped in, in fact, not to talk of anything definite, not to see anyone in particular, but merely to show himself politely, as a man might show himself at his sister's reception, or on election day at his club. A hurrying office-boy, quite purged of all the traditional

impudence, came out presently to tell him that Mr. Dodson was eager to see him, and would come out to welcome him immediately a tedious caller could be got rid of. "Tell him to hurry," said the visitor laconically, and the office-boy darted back. The man threw down his magazine with a gesture of disgust, and turned placidly to glance at Miriam. . . . She recognized him in a flash, from his endless portraits in the literary press, as Hawthorne Hilliard.

There is something tremendously interesting about a person starting forth in perfectly good faith to a heartily planned achievement and walking straight into the arms of an entirely different one. In the present instance there had been not the slightest warning, no more suggestion of a trip-up than the brush-covered hurdle suggests to the leaping horse the hard wood that catches his foot and throws him. Miriam might, in fact, be likened to the excited animal ready for just such a leap. She believed she was going to see a publisher about her book. In reality she was going to meet Hawthorne Hilliard.

As her eyes fell upon him she started, and, strangely enough, her mind reverted, in a kind of spasmotic flash, to a reminiscence of herself, a bit dazed, on the street corner down in Atlanta at the moment when the curious, spontaneous impulse came upon her that brought her quickly to New York. It was as if not the reason, but the impulse, had been explained. But what was not explained was the lost feeling, the sense of lost purpose that attacked her, a certain shrinkage in importance of the very thing, so supremely important, that had brought her here. It was as one but half conscious that she told the inquiring office-boy, now suddenly recrudescent, of her desire to consult some responsible attaché of the firm upon a matter of business, and as one but still no more than half in the possession of her faculties that she gave her name to the young man who almost immediately appeared. Accustomed to

the often absurd nervousness of young authors, just as a surgeon is to the qualms and terrors of his patients, this young man sought to put her at her ease with grave courtesy, in which, one must note, condescension was not unmingled. The colloquy occupied some moments, and while it went on, though her back was turned, she was acutely aware of the scrutiny of Hawthorne Hilliard. He sat behind her, still at the table, motionless and silent, and yet she felt his presence and his attention almost as vividly as if he had had his arm around her shoulder.

There can be no question, indeed, of the fact that he was studying her. Instantly his practised eye recognized in her the possible answer from the unseen to his command for new material. This was emphasized by the splendid manner in which she recovered herself—righted herself might be the better way to express her reversion to the superior, the thrusting forward of her superiority. She would resist, and that magnificently. Also, while it was quite easy to give her her twenty-four years, and maybe more (her height and fulness gave her more), it was quite plain that her senses had stirred only in dreams. Hilliard, with characteristic acuteness, saw instantly that her resistance would be a magnificent effort not to scatter, to hold herself intact, and that fierce resistance of hers became instantly his new theme. His opening description of her as he outlined it in his mind, would picture a modern Aurora splitting the darkness with her brilliant apparition; and then, as she stood quickly righting herself and superbly poised before the editor, the rest of the portrait was mentally penned. She had taken the floor, as well as a chair, and was talking a bit impulsively and excitedly, telling all about the wonders of the book she had written—that it was, and this quite unaffectedly, the story of herself, a human document. She said a good many things in a rich, clear voice that had the defiantly thrilling arrogant tones of rich natures, and whatever she said, every gesture, every

changing expression, was purely a performance on a stage for the silent man across the table.

Finally, an important detail was being enacted. She had failed to put her address on the manuscript. The editor was asking her for it. She named her hotel, not forgetting the women's floor.

She was gone then and the two men were alone.

Hilliard arose, went over to the window, and looked out upon the city.

"My next book is all right now," he said.

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

V

THE author, having reached the modern palace of which his apartment formed a part, was thinking of what he would say in an interview he was, and that suddenly, planning to give to a woman journalist concerning his last novel, the discussion of which was still going on. He was thinking, also, of the strange workings of what was called Providence, pausing to regret that it was not pronounced in French—and the especial workings that had housed the woman he had just encountered in a manner that would lead her to him through a path made glossy, in his eyes, by non-resistance.

A smile that exactly matched his thought crossed his features, which, strange to say, somewhat resembled those of Gabriello D'Annunzio. Then, with a manner and gesture that were perhaps the heritage of some titled Latin, he reached a white hand across the ebony table upon which his writing was done and touched a bell.

It was responded to by the Japanese servant, invariably in evidence when art and wealth meet in New York. The present one, in native costume, was a pretty little specimen whom, once or twice, his master had threatened to fasten upon a pedestal as an ornament quite in keeping with the beaten brass, the tapestries, the Egyptian curios, and all the rest of a splendor that

people generally declared unequalled, and in which, for once, they were right.

His servant entered.

"Kakubo!" Hilliard did not look up from the papers in front of him.

"Yes, sir?"

"Tell my secretary to go to Mrs. Sheridan's hotel, see her if she is in, and if not, leave word that I shall be charmed to give her the interview about my book. Say that I will give it this evening, here."

VI

At nine o'clock that night the largest room of Hilliard's twelve-quartered apartment, designated the studio, was ablaze with light.

A poet acquaintance of the author's had said his habitation resembled a conglomeration of mammoth jewels suspended in space, framed by the heavens and lit by both the rising and setting sun. It might be said, borrowing his imagination, that he was not very far wrong, that what he had described Hilliard had attained.

This strange jewel very nearly hung over Central Park, and the sky effect above the green, cut by straight or circuitous roads that looked in the distance like yards of unrolled gray ribbon, was entrancing and alluring. At present this vision, prized by Hilliard and used by him, in its many phases, to furnish descriptions for his books, was entirely shut out. He was figuring splendidly on a boxed-in stage, like an actor awaiting the rise of the curtain. The rise of the curtain meant the arrival of Mrs. Sheridan, and suddenly it went up.

The surprise upon her face was not at the splendor of the environment in which she found herself, not even at the delicate charm of the author in his velvet house-coat, but at his strange willingness to grant her the interview she desired.

"This is very good of you," she stepped forward to say, still with the surprise ripened into expectancy on her

face, or rather by now reflected from her eyes.

"You need not trouble to offer me polite formulas, Belle. Take off," he smiled, "your rather wonderful wrap, your hat, too—and sit down and listen to what I have to say."

"But first," she was undoing the clasp of a dark blue sable-edged velvet cape, "why, after persistently refusing, have you decided to give me the interview?"

"By which you mean that there is a reason that disclaims my apparent generosity? You are right!"

For just one moment he flashed at her a characteristic sex glance that, knowing its trifling meaning, she ever felt—that is, had for many years—was a manifestation of insolence. It was merely a patronizing remembrance that held the sweets and bitter, more especially the bitter, of a past experience. Nevertheless, she may have underestimated the immediate intention, for as splendid as a woman past forty can look, she certainly, on the present occasion, did.

She was not a woman who maintains youth as a part of age, but time seemed to have spun over her a diaphanous, crusted mantle that caught lights and glittered. This the author noted to her advantage. He may even have recalled that it was he who had destroyed her youth and rendered her sufficiently callous for time to weave just such a splendid web about her. For a moment the purpose of her visit was lost in the flash of an idea—that he might again use her in a story to be called "After Fifteen Years." But he instantly repudiated this as too strenuous a demand, and confined himself to the real purpose of her presence—as a matter of fact, a double one. She was to concern herself with the girl of the morning, but first she was to concern herself with him, and he took the two things in the order they came.

In spite of her, at times, fierce and always just hatred of him—he had very nearly wrecked her—when, inspired by him, her skill to describe him

became a passion. The glamour of being interviewed for the press had long since passed him by—that is, of being interviewed in the ordinary way—but what she wrote, this cynical effluvia of a passion that refused to expire, was still interesting—interesting to the point that he was willing to evoke it.

She interrupted his critical study of her to repeat her genuine "why."

"I will tell you," he said, himself relieving her of the hat she was taking off and placing it in the seat of a scarlet chair. "With the book that we shall discuss out of the way, I am beginning a new one."

"Yes?" While sharp there was something suppressed in her tone. "And you want me," her eyes began to glow, "to select someone for you to fling on the flames?"

"I like your way of putting it, Belle, but I don't want you to do that. I want you to arrange a meeting for me with my own selection."

She sprang up. "I won't do it! I won't be a part of it! Why don't you create your own characters?"

"There is not enough excitement in purely creative work for me. I am the actor who can only play well his part if the actress of the cast is really in love with him."

It was strange of this rarefied being that the colder and more deliberate he was, the more he inflamed women. The present woman was inflamed. She took her seat as impulsively as she had taken to her feet.

"I won't do it!" she exclaimed. "I won't be a part of it! You remember the last time—that little French girl! She killed herself!" The glow in her eyes blazed.

"Girls kill themselves every day—as a part of the Creator's drama," remarked the great author calmly.

"And you are one of His instruments to that end!"

"Possibly. There are many parts assigned in the great play."

"Did it ever occur to you that one—one woman might be assigned to"—she bent to him—"get even with you?"

"No, I have never thought of that. I have never been affected by a woman since I began to write of them. I merely see the play of their emotions. You know that."

The steely flash from his hazel-striped eyes cut her like a whip, taking, as such a glance always did, her strength. She became a bit wilted and wearied. The sparkle of her grew dull. It was always so, and yet at his call she never failed to come. A word from him and the old hunger for him, the old hunger of an unsatisfied passion, awoke and stung her to action. There was never any thought of hope in her response; it was only that she was unable to resist him, like a child who cannot allow the scratch of a brier to heal.

Hilliard had gotten up and moved over to a button that extinguished the central chandelier. When he returned he stood looking upon her indifferently.

"I saw a girl, from the South, I believe—I have never handled that type—at my publisher's this morning. She looked—well, I should say, unconquerable—as though she might be harboring the spirit of some old Confederate general, still waiting to fight back. Have you seen such a girl about your hotel? She's on the woman's floor with you."

"Yes, I have; an arrogant creature who has written a book!"

Hilliard liked to watch the color recede from the strong features. It was a particular thing about her that he had depicted very tellingly.

"That is the girl! I want you to bring her here to-morrow evening to dinner. I am going to write her up."

"If," and a rather unexpected and peculiar laugh broke from her, "she doesn't write *you* up!"

Hilliard's eyes drew together in a sharp frown and were covered for a moment as by a pale veil. Then he smiled.

"You believe," he said, "that she is a woman about whom I might lose my head? My dear Belle, you are losing yours!"

He moved over and turned a chair to face a window.

"And now," he said with his hand on the chair and making a picture of superb masculine provocativeness, "if you will sit here, lean back, look at the sky, and listen, I will talk the book to you!"

VII

WHEN the newspaper woman reached her own room on the floor that housed the girl that Hilliard had selected for his next vivisection it was past twelve o'clock. Hilliard's own car had borne her hither, and she could define no cause for the intense inertia, the weariness, the utter deadness of her, except the old idea that she had long since attached to him—that women in his presence were ravished of their souls and left mere shells of dead flesh.

She recalled the day she first thought of him thus, and how the idea had strengthened and satisfied her, as if, after long wanderings, she had definitely and accurately placed him. But this was only temporary, and she had but to see him, be a while in his presence, to be, as it were, robbed of all her old certainty. The spirit of his irony, the decay in him of all that was heroic or ennobling, she had once defined as the cause, but always this was followed by a vague sense of the presence of what it was impossible to define at all. The rectitude of his deportment, his failure to demand, created confusion in the atmosphere of him, though it might be charged, as it surely was, with sensuality.

As the girl she was to lead—and it never occurred to her that she would not—into this poisoned atmosphere came up, the splendid vision of her in her health and peculiarly expressed vigor, Belle shrank from it. But this was followed by another feeling, envy of her, envy of this very poisoned atmosphere, of Hilliard himself, who meant, after all, a languishment into a dream even though the awakening brought horrors from which there was,

or had been in her case, no recovery. It changed her solicitude for the girl into acute, the worst part of her uppermost, hatred. For a brief moment, as this hatred of another woman attacked her, she glittered into beauty. Then, all of a sudden, patches dimmed the lustre of her, so that it took on a pewter tinge and she began to look old, as though seen through a ragged grey veil.

She stood thus quite a while, slowly and deliberately, as though unconscious of any action, stripping off her gloves. Then she seemed to awaken, and, dropping into a low armchair, she clasped together her strong white hands, upon which flashed diamonds, the gifts of a different man from Hilliard, and fell into reminiscent meditation.

How short and yet how long had been those fifteen years since she had, as it were, blown into New York on a strong Western wind to obtain for a Park Row newspaper an interview with Hawthorne Hilliard, who was advancing like a newly discovered comet in the literary skies. She had got the interview. For a long while she sat in deep thought, her strong features reflecting emotions that scarred her face as fire scars a building. In this moment she felt that she was like an old house in which repeated fires had done their destructive work. Old houses were painted—so were old faces. . . . She glanced over at her dressing table, laughed an unpleasant laugh and sprang to her feet. The idea wasn't bad. She would put it down. But when she reached her desk she turned from it and remained perfectly still, gazing ahead of her.

Finally, she stood up and spoke aloud in a clear, almost ringingly metallic voice.

"Belle Sheridan," she said, "I thought you had gotten over being a fool. You're a business woman, and it is business that now confronts you. Hawthorne Hilliard has given you the first interview on his book and he wants you to arrange a dinner party at which

you are to introduce to him a girl he wants to meet. Go to it!"

As she fell into the slang of her world she laughed and threw up her left hand as though it held the ignited memories that she would scatter. But her fingers closed and she walked, peering ahead of her, over to her mirror and looked into it long and curiously at the old familiar face, of which at the moment she felt intensely tired. Turning away finally with a masculine gesture and movement of the body, she poured out whiskey from a decanter and drank it. . . . It had a decidedly invigorating effect. Her movements became quite lively as she began to lay her plans for the morrow.

VIII

In the meantime what of the object of her calculations, the girl for whom she was gathering fagots for the fires of experience, she for whom she was to become a conductor to the altar, and for whom a false feast was being prepared?

Like some unconscious warrior with plotting enemies lying in wait, Miriam lay asleep in her tent. . . . It is interesting to watch her thus in her virginal innocence, an unawakened Venus, whose passions have as yet been stirred only by dreams of heroes, thoughts that led back to past centuries, with no hint in them of the future. . . .

Through the frosted transom a pale light falls upon her. A little oppressed by the steam heat, to which she is unused, she has, possibly unconsciously, thrown back the covers. The gossamer night garment, well open at the throat, reveals it, as if by intention, in all its marble-like strength. Beneath it the warm over-full bosom, defiantly defined, takes on a pinker tinge. Above her head, half-lost in the coarse, wavy, chestnut hair that, even in the dimness, sheds a glow, one bared arm, full and strong, has the color of rich cream.

The room, small, modern and bizarre, might easily suggest some splendid barbaric tent for just such an un-

conscious warrior. The effect of the walls, greyish with black stripes, is zebra-like. The floor of pale gold is so highly polished as to resemble topaz. One scarlet rug drinks in its light. The twin windows are covered with silken draperies in those same startling zebra-like stripes. They hang straight to the floor, suggestive of an entrance. At her head the electric reading lamp seems to have drawn to its shade a swarm of butterflies. In one corner is the little gold Marie Antoinette desk before which she stood yesterday, mentally handling her dream of fame, and upon which she has placed the pen with which her book was written, the pen that it might be said was used to bring her to Hawthorne Hilliard. One might almost, so assured is one of his position, fancy him parting the dazzling striped curtains and entering victorious, like Prinzivalle the Florentine.

To this man, to whom so superb a woman was no more than so much fodder for his literary cannon, it would indeed be an ecstatic moment. His face, that sinister D'Annunzio face, would be pale, one fancies, with the excitement of the explorer, and perhaps also with old memories, the thought of old adventures, half-forgotten thrills. In this very moment of, to the normal man, supreme invitation, would he lean over her to kiss her lips with passion, eagerness, joy? Or would he kiss them only, as it were, by cold design—to arouse in their owner a desire, the more ardent because against her will, to play the part he had planned for her? . . . They would be kisses, it is more than sure, that might be likened to the prods of an animal trainer's steel hook, which induce the poor beast to prance grotesquely upon its forepaws, that the groundlings may be diverted.

No; Hawthorne Hilliard was not a lover. He was a vivisectionist of women.

IX

THERE are those who indulge sensuous emotions to be rid of them. There

are others who feed them lingeringly to enjoy their slow and exquisite death—to whom realization is coupled with painful cessation. The former, it may be conceded, constitute the larger part of literary as well as other feeders; they are the ones to whom preliminaries are a weariness of the flesh, to whom, in fact, the brief second of a minute or hour, as the case may be, of definite realization constitutes the whole. In deference to such, it is easy to leave the complex author (after all, too easily decipherable) to his dream, and turn to Belle Sheridan, to whom protracted preliminaries had been denied, and to say of her that she did "go to it," and that with her to go to a thing was to succeed.

And so what was more simple, to her, than that at seven o'clock Hilliard's own car was bearing the two ladies to his apartment?

X

PERHAPS the joyous exuberance of Miriam's beauty had never so nearly reached its climax as when she found herself in the inexplicable position—borne hither by a strange woman—of being in one of Hawthorne Hilliard's softly yet magnificently illumined rooms. It was through surprise and a quite natural bewilderment that it had been reached. As Belle Sheridan, apparently in the hands of an invisible stage director, took her position in the rear and at a considerable distance to one side, and two somewhat languishing-looking figures in the form of men in evening clothes advanced to her, the author, apparently shedding a lustre, busied himself to relieve her of her pale leaf-green wrap.

Having taken it, another than Hilliard might have broken into exclamation. Her uncovering, or rather herself thus uncovered, suggested one of those stage effects that cause the audience to catch its breath. Hilliard, of course, did not catch his breath: he merely pressed his foot to a button that flooded her in a very brilliant shower

of light from above and so caused her to catch *hers*. And then there issued from her lips a joyous, self-confident, almost insolent, laugh.

Her amazement, her bewilderment, unattended by any shadow of embarrassment, it must be confessed, did surprise Mr. Hilliard. In a breath, instead of holding himself aloof to lead her on, she forced upon him the necessity of offering her all the charm and brilliance he knew himself to be capable of. He led her with a manner as polite and finished as that of an old-time dancing master—that, at least, was what she thought—to a davenport, where, noting that its gold color would accentuate her illumination, he seated himself beside her.

For fifteen minutes or more Miriam, thus placed, was played upon by the full powers of a man, all too strangely and absorbingly interesting to the uninitiated, who lived solely in the beauty of things and not in their value. It was insidious drink. At the end of a few moments she was, and that quite consciously, intoxicated. The beauty of things new to her was in her eyes, the delight of a wholly artistic, all-powerful personality was pouring, as he intended it should, magically through her senses. She was not, while she listened attentively enough, her eyes for the better part in a kind of rapture upon his face, wholly collected. Her one clear and undefined desire was that the situation might never end. She liked the way it had come, in the manner one might say of a fairy tale, and she would have it continue in this same fairy-tale way. There were moments of mental clearing up, instants of getting her bearings. In such a moment she would glance over in a corner, appropriated by Mrs. Sheridan, to make sure of her, that it was not really a dream and would experience relief if she heard a laugh from her, or if she could catch a sentence in her, to Miriam, strangely pitched, rather beautiful voice. Then, at some melting word from Hilliard, some poetic question as to herself, she would grow confused

again, so that one moment, when she glanced at Mrs. Sheridan, who had red flowers in her hair, she seemed to be on fire.

A little later dinner was announced and Hilliard led her through what appeared to her to be labyrinthine grandeur to a dining-room where he placed her at table beside him. The lights in this room were dazzlingly bright, the flowers of violent colorings, the service Oriental. It seemed to Miriam, as she took her seat, that they were all, every single thing that presented itself to her eye or touch, charged with Hilliard, that everything about her was but a part of him.

"You see," she heard him saying to her, "you make to me no personal appeal—you seem merely to represent woman as an idea, and so from the moment I saw you yesterday I wanted to know you and try to understand."

"I had no notion of meeting you so soon again."

"Didn't Mrs. Sheridan tell you?"

"No, only that she was dining at a famous writer's and would take me. My nature," she smiled, "is one open to adventure, and so I came."

Her blue eyes, strangely blue with their grey light, were straight in his. "Of course," she said, "I recognized you yesterday. And I was a bit bewildered when I came in."

"Naturally. Just as you proved," and he smiled quite innocently, like a normal man attracted, "on first sight a bit bewildering to me. You were, if you can understand, a new experience in woman!"

"Yes. Why?"

He lifted her ignored wine glass for her and she took it quite obediently and drank with him.

"You seemed," he continued, replacing his own glass with a movement of the fingers that sent a distinct thrill through her, "to awake in me ideals of what women were when this world was without human habitation or invention, merely a wilderness of flowers where the whole duty of woman was to be beautiful. I found in you instantly and

on first glance, as you entered the room, naturalness and simplicity. You still suggest that, and for that reason may I remind you that the atmosphere of New York may prove dangerous?"

"Yes," she repeated eagerly. "Why?"

"A flower dies easily when pinned to the breast of a worldly woman!"

He studied her long and fervently after this, and Miriam suddenly felt embarrassed. The sensation that women had of feeling naked in his presence was upon her. But she was not wholly disconcerted. She herself was an analyst, and more especially of words, and his she felt to be rather meaningless, forced words—with no actual significance. Hilliard recognized this subconscious estimation of him, but it in no way disconcerted him.

As a servant removed his plate from the other side he bent over and touched her bared shoulder with his own.

"There came over me," he exclaimed as he claimed her eyes, "the desire to snatch you away—you, the rose—and place you in a crystal goblet of pure water—to hide you, in other words, from all eyes! Then it was that I decided to invite you here!"

"As," flashed Miriam, to his surprise, "you have others?"

"What others?" inquired Hilliard, with a sudden glance at her.

"Those whom I have read of in your books! I," she added quickly, "know them all!"

The writer smiled derisively.

"They," he said lightly, "were but creations of my brain. You appeal to me as a reality. I might," and his words were a whisper now, "consider you as a part of a man's life. I could never"—and no man could lie as well as Hilliard—"put you between the pages of a book!"

He turned from her then to his other guests, Belle Sheridan and the two languishing-looking figureheads that were men in evening clothes, and again treated her to the brilliant side of him. He had wonderful skill in the art of conversation, the skill that could make of truth a vulgar parasite on life and

transform skepticism and evil into joyous things. His was the kind of conversation that charms by its futility and inefficiency, that keeps one grasping, momentarily resentful, unsatisfied and yet expectant.

Meanwhile the dinner progressed, dragging its seductive length into a couple of hours. Plate after plate was changed, one rare dish following another and always the fragrant crystal wines flowed.

When the cups of black coffee had been served, and the butler was standing like a statue, Mr. Hilliard pushed back his chair and rose. . . .

The evening was over. . . .

XI

It is not difficult to describe the effect retrospectively upon Miriam as she stood once more, at the hour of twelve, in the room of zebra-like walls. With all the lights now ablaze she was going over the evening and over herself as well.

As to practical details, it was all quite simple. She had been, all too magically, as by the touch of a fairy wand, to a place of surpassing wonder, a kind of habitation unknown to her even in imagination, and she had met a famous author. She had in addition been the especial object of the author's attention, and a feast had been prepared by him in her honor. This was quite natural; she had been ordained for honors, but the real question was, what had *happened* to her? What had been turned on in her, just as she had in this room a moment before turned on lights that caused her to feel ablaze.

Suddenly, just as the same thing had happened to her on that street corner in Atlanta, everything about her seemed suddenly to wither. This room, such a wonder yesterday, now seemed to her merely a somewhat tawdrily decorated paper box. In glancing over it she felt only the need of paper flowers to complete the effect of spectacular cheapness. Yesterday it had represented charm. At the present moment the

charm had fled. She continued to look about her, dismayed, estranged, experiencing embarrassment that small things had so intoxicated her.

Suddenly she let her wrap fall to the floor and spread out her arms. Her heart began to beat violently and she felt lifted up as one given over to an immediate and desperate step. The step was by no means undefined. There was no cloud of doubt surrounding it. She must go back there! She was quite conscious of the desperate nature of the appeal; it was like a wild thing that had suddenly gnawed at her reason, and her terror was that it would consume it. It *had* consumed it! She must go back there! She must ring a bell, order a conveyance and be taken there quickly before the spell of what was upon her escaped her.

She looked over at the bell and her beautiful, half-frightened eyes stared with the look of the demented. The room seemed slipping from beneath her feet as she held on to her wish to be back there! It was as though there were but one place in the world bound by the nothingness of space. And she must be in that place as she had been reelingly drunk upon mystery, an unmaterialized being, an evil angel! For in it all, with her senses quickened, she had scented evil, but evil that she craved, evil that contained for her in this hour some element of good! To wait! There are moments when waiting is intolerable, when it stifles and suffocates, and that kind of idea of waiting was upon her.

Oh! to see those lights coming through the red eyes of dragons, to see them in all curious places through curious forms, glowing like smouldering fires, gleaming on brass surfaces and bringing out the nude figures of women on tapestries, or on forest scenes with plumed knights riding away as though to the arms of women! To feel the touch of those marvellous rugs that dragged at her to prostrate herself upon their rich tangled surfaces! There was one of such a strange dark blue. That was the one

she had stood in the centre of, head back, eyes half-closed, seeing what was about her become a dream that made her breathe deeply, take long breaths as when the forest at nightfall sucks in warm languorous winds from the South. Hilliard! Ah! She felt faint and a pallor touched her face, that seemed to extend to her feet and turn her to marble. Hilliard! In all her thoughts she had been escaping him, holding away from him as one shuns the quicksand that one steps into to be submerged. She was not yet equal to him.

And so she forced herself once more, already half wearily now, to roam in fancy through his rooms, those strange stages, all set, as it were, each and every one, for some replete drama! She looked again upon the lights, weird and mystical as phosphorus on a warm sea, breathed the fragrance of incense escaping like dangerous smoke from some smouldering earth surface, heard the tinkle of cut glass and saw the marvels of a feast that held every color of the rainbow, heard the music that issued strangely from corners, Caruso sending forth from his lungs passion in the form of tone that took her strength and left her panting. And then she saw herself as she was in the midst of it all—one moment standing like a statue, the next moving about, following a suggestion of his for her eye, another for her senses. She saw how splendid she was, but—splendid *there!*

Now what was she? A chilled thing, lost, bewildered, something that had become a part of something else, away from that something else useless—an inanity. All things, big and little, her past life with its triumphs, even her book—what were they? Things to be laughed at, wildly, with the maniac's laugh, and then forgotten! One thing, one thing only counted: to be back there, see him, watch him—his strange coldly sensuous face, with its eyes that froze one or burned to the nerve-centres at will—to see his hands, hands that the mere lifting of passed tremors over her, to watch him lift things, pass them, to

see him change his positions, move about, express in all things and in nothing the wonder of a god.

For quite a while she stood thus, lost in a mad rapture of infatuation. And then suddenly she laughed, stretched herself, flung up her arms, and began to undress. The room was now quite natural again and she herself quite natural, too! Rapture, she was thinking, is flight, and while quietly stepping out of her clothes and carefully depositing them on a sofa and chairs, no aviator ever planned more definitely than this girl, conscious of the necessity for mental preparation and conscious of the added charm of danger.

Her sleep was unclouded and peaceful. In the morning at nine o'clock she had one vivid instant that must have been a dream. She was standing again upon the dark, strangely mysterious blue rug. Her head was back, her eyes were half-closed, her breathing was quick. In reality, the night before, while she stood thus, from another room, through the opening of weighty portieres of a dull yellow-green cloth of gold, Hilliard had observed her. In her dream he had stepped forward, a man of metal it seemed to her, and gripping her to him so that she experienced a sharp shock of pain, had pressed to hers his hard mouth and burnt a kiss upon it that stabbed her with fiery needles.

It awoke her, and she opened her eyes with a slight cry. And then she laughed again, a light laugh this time, and leaped from the bed and stripping herself in a kind of childish glee, she ran and stood beneath the cold shower that streamed down her marble-like form and shone in the artificial light she had switched on like liquid crystal. When she came forth with her bathrobe of steel blue towelling about her she was as virile and full of daring for the battle of love as any young Spartan of old starting forth to war.

Only one moment of weakness manifested itself. It was her failure to pick up letters that had been thrust under

her door. She rejected them as not a part of *this*.

"I am living," she said, conscious of ignoring the letters. "I want no memories," and stretching her body luxuriantly she flung her arms about, breathing through her eyes her passion in existence, her joy in the magnificent possibilities she felt that her being, this warm beautiful self-thrilled body of hers, held.

She reached over, touched a button and flooded herself in more light. She was like the blind ravished by sight, or the statue that has become imbued with life and whose eagerness is madness. Presently a delicious languor overtook her, she smiled a beautiful smile of conscious joy, and the space, magnetically charged by the electrical emanation of a being at highest tide and pitch, seemed to take the smile and bear it away for her remembrance. She was conscious of this and then it seemed that it had joined with Hilliard's smile, that his was writhing about it, and she grew alarmed. With her eyes somewhat ablaze as they stared before her, she put her hands straight out as though to offset this fear and proclaim herself ready.

XII

It was at this moment that Belle Sheridan, with the familiarity of being a part of a common cause, knocked and entered.

The evening, with its numerous points of contact at Hilliard's rooms and the silent ride home in his car, each busy with her own thoughts, had broken down all barriers of strangeness between them. The two women were to all intents and purposes friends, although to Belle Sheridan, on the first glimpse at her in her wondrous beauty, the girl could only, in the very nature of things, be regarded as an enemy. Nevertheless she exclaimed genuinely: "How radiant you look!"

"I feel radiant," returned Miriam and flung out her fresh young laugh as she merrily leaped into the bed.

As the older woman gazed upon her, strong and perfect as some forest animal, and as unconscious, there came over her a quick fierce and sudden desire to betray Hilliard. By betraying Hilliard she meant to tell her own story to the girl, who, thus warned, would thwart his purpose. It was as though for a moment she had sold the glowing creature before her for an interview, sold her to be utilized, not for the usual bestial purposes of men—no bestial purpose, indeed, at all—but to be put on the rack and tortured. Inwardly, she was thinking, she is too absolutely splendid! Why shouldn't she tell her; why shouldn't she show her her own scars, tell how they had been branded upon her—tell, too, of the little Annette, of others, and that she was to be the next one!

She took a seat close up to the side of the bed and urged by an irrepressible impulse she did tell.

"I wonder," she asked, peering at her, "if you know how beautiful you are?"

"I wonder," Miriam returned joyously, "if you know how beautiful *you* are? I thought so last night, especially when I saw you standing in the red reflection of that strange lamp in the corner, the one in front of that gold peacock with the spread tail. I thought how really wonderful—"

"You mean," interrupted Belle, "how wonderful I must have been! I was—I was not unlike you when I met Hawthorne Hilliard!"

"And," smiled Miriam, "he fell in love with you?"

"In love! Bah! He *used* me!"

"Used you? How?"

The older woman paused a moment. "Did you ever," she asked, "see a young sapling after it had been struck and rent by lightning?"

"I have," and Miriam again smiled, "yes."

"Very well then, that's what a woman is, after Hawthorne Hilliard is done with her!"

Miriam did not smile, she paled.

"It must be very wonderful," she breathed, "to be attacked like that!"

"You think so, and to bear the feeling of being withered and scarred the rest of your life? That," and she leaned forward and gripped the girl by the wrist, "is what will happen to *you*!"

Miriam surprised her by breaking away from her and bursting into a peal of laughter.

"It's so absurd," she said finally, "for women to take love like that, to use man for anything but to get joy out of him! When I love it won't be to suffer, but to get joy—all," and she fell most beautifully into slang, "that's coming to me!"

For a moment Belle Sheridan was speechless, and then she found it incumbent to rather wearily echo the slang. "Oh!" she said vacantly, "you'll get all that's coming to you!"

"I shall not object. If it—the experience—really does come to me—if that was his object in meeting me—to make me perform for him—I'll enjoy the performance."

"Perform for him?" inquired Belle, and looked bewildered.

"Yes, that's what all the women in his books do. I've made a study of them. You—let me see—were Cathryn performing for him, weren't you?"

"Yes"—Belle felt a bit breathless—"I was; that is what I was going to tell you," she spoke vehemently, "to warn you. After that, do you," and she laughed, "want all that's coming to you?"

"Do I!" laughed back the girl, "all, and more! Why, to have had your experiences was worth being scarred from head to foot! But," she paused reflectively, "why do you say scars? Why not call your memories marks of ecstasy?"

"Ecstasy?" A laugh now escaped Belle, but it was caught in her throat by a gasp. "Ah!" she breathed, "do you recall that story? Do you remember how that woman was made to suffer? It was all true—true of me! I went through all that—all that madness, and when his book was finished I might as well have been a hired model that some artist was through with and dismissing."

"You should have enjoyed your experience," answered Miriam calmly, "and while he was using you, used him!"

"Used him?"

"Certainly, that is, if I get the chance, what I'm going to do! I have already analyzed him, and I am going in for a great experience with him—a splendid experience!"

"To be flung back on yourself, crippled for life!" said Belle, bending forward to her.

"If I don't fling him back on himself, crippled for life!" laughed the girl. "Of course," she went on with the *naïveté* of a child, "I don't know how it's all going to end—what this story of me is to be, but I do know that whatever his intention is I shall find delight in it—in watching myself develop under it into something wonderful! I have always done that—watched the effect of things upon myself. It, the thing, has never amounted to anything except as I was affected by it, and I have always felt that if a great passion should come to me—as it *has*—she smiled—"the man," and she triumphed visibly, "would be the least part of it. It would all be what it meant to *me*, what he was able to make *me* feel and experience. Isn't it so with other things? For instance," she went on ardently, "we go to hear a great violinist, to have him play as agonizingly as possible upon our emotions—stir us until we grow cold and hot by turns and almost faint! Isn't that so?—and we call it pleasure and go back again and again, if we can, for that same racking pleasure. Instead of seeking love in that way, as a rare and delightful emotional experience, we say if we happen to have reached its limit, just because such transcendent moments do not last—they can't any more than the fierce blazes of kindling wood—that our lives are ruined. Ruined! We ought to say 'made'! Why, I lived more last night in a few hours than in all my life of twenty-four years! I'm on fire with new experiences, new sensations. I'm the kindling wood that the match has

touched into flames. I *want* to burn and feel myself burst into flame! When I am through with my experience, if a great writer has recorded it, what do I care! The hours that went to make his book were mine. I—"

The telephone rang and she leaped from the bed and sprang to it.

"It was he," she said, turning breathlessly and grown pale. "He is coming for me at twelve! I'm to have breakfast with him!"

"Don't go with him!" exclaimed Belle, springing up and catching her again by her strong wrist. She, too, was white.

For a moment they stood thus like two wrestlers, while Miriam somewhat haughtily studied her. Finally she laughed in her face.

"You're envious of me," she said; "it isn't the pain you think I may be called upon to endure, but the joy, the rapture—and listen to me! I wouldn't miss it for the whole world! You have had your hour; this one," and she broke from her and stood off with the lifted head of a victor, "is mine!"

The feeling that first presented itself to Belle Sheridan when on the outside of the door was disgust at the bravado of the girl. But this vanished. This girl, who was not afraid of herself, of Hilliard or of whatever was coming to her, was a wonder! She stood in awe of such a creature.

XIII

THE trouble with supremely egotistical, no matter how splendid, natures is, that they calculate from their own point of view, doing away in advance with their antagonists. And so Miriam was somewhat surprised to find herself at table at Sherry's with four other women and two men beside Hilliard. They were, she soon concluded, of New York's ultra-smart set. They certainly, at any rate, considered themselves from the superlatively superior standpoint, and evidently accepted her as a surprise—one, however, to be quickly overlooked, if not done away with.

The men, it seemed to her, were rather indifferent to her charms, and if the advanced women of the struggling brigade at the hotel had flung her upon her mettle these supercilious ones, with light talk that fell from their lips as indifferently as petals from a wilting flower, rather threw her upon the ground. Her buoyancy was instantly checked by beings among whom buoyancy was relegated to the barracks of vulgarity. In their presence, they were, she thought, like persons who had been whittled and polished, and to whom interest in life, at any rate, made manifest, was a lost chord. She felt a bit heavy, as though she were altogether too physically large, and an utterly new feeling of dismay overcame her as, apparently overlooked by Hilliard, and left to the waiters, she wondered why he had brought her here, while it was only too plain to see he had brought her to be reduced to just such bewilderment.

Hilliard had been regarded and considered by her from one standpoint, that of an author, but all the points at which she mentally met him vanished, as he thus, and that adroitly, presented himself in this new light—that of a society man.

She could only listen to the languid, fluent language of persons speaking and living in a world unknown to her, see her plates taken and renewed, and under the influence of an unfamiliar environment regard it as a dream from which she would wake to find herself, as she had expected, alone with Hilliard. Not once did it occur to her that the very independence of spirit upon which she relied to make her a match for him would be the first thing this so accomplished duellist of sex would attempt to rob her of—the first thing to be broken down. Never once did she dream that for six weeks she would be subjected to just such a process of breaking down; not once alone with him for even an instant, always in public as a part of others. In other words, Miriam, in her youthful exuberance and magnificent poise, poise from the standpoint of what

she was used to, had not counted upon Hilliard. On the other hand, Hilliard had not counted on her, inasmuch as for the first time since his nineteenth year a woman, the woman in her, apart from selfish purpose, had appealed to him. If he represented a feast of passion to her, she equally represented a feast of passion to him.

Hilliard was quick to resent this as a part of him long since outgrown—that is, that a woman should present herself to him from the two standpoints of art and feeling. Feeling with him was a vulgar interference with mental and artistic experiences, to be banished through the proper channel, the channel that greater men than he had utilized for that purpose. He was, therefore, careful to put himself in a position where, as he calculated, he would be invulnerable to her wholly magnificent and dominating personality. In open fight, or, it might be said, secret, her manœuvres and actions generally, from her own innate strength and charm, might have prevailed, and so what more natural than that Hilliard should not grant her this open or secret fight? His attentions to her were through other women, women who, possessing nothing, had yet been chastened by the world into possessing everything. It was through these women that he presented his fascination to her, that she might be reduced, through this fascination, into a revelation of her emotional self that would make his book.

If Miriam responded to him, or fell into the trap set for her, it would end with her bewilderment. To all intents and purposes, however, to his own bewilderment, she stood still, refusing to act. These admittedly uncomprehended women were to her like pale, rootless orchids; their men attendants, equally uncomprehended, were indifferent to them, quite, and unappreciative as well of the fresh rose—herself. Together with Hilliard, who had undoubtedly assembled them, expending lavishly for her benefit, they represented an interesting spectacle of which she was a mere onlooker. That the atmosphere of

them was poison to her, and that the position of onlooker wearying in the extreme—at the end of three weeks her growing slenderness attested this—she, like a brave fighter, did not deny. Neither, however, did she deny that the game was worth the candle. The game was Hilliard. His opportunity to familiarize himself with her gave her the opportunity to watch him, and while hungry and restless as a caged animal, she also congratulated herself that since she must first watch him, it was lucky that it could be done under such favorable, if not entrancing, conditions. All these settings of splendor in which he contrived for her to see him were, while tantalizing, worth while. Ready for her experience, fretting at times at the delay, as it were herself biting at her own flesh, she was not unmindful of all that was coming her way. And that was Miriam!

The sound of Hilliard's voice, the glance of his eye, the lifting of his hands; to see him change his positions; smile into other women's eyes; put a wrap tenderly upon a pair of powdered shoulders, all furnished her with thrills.

And then one day, Hilliard, with a slight feeling of being beaten at his own game, decided to change his tactics. He sent her no more invitations. It was as though, as far as he was concerned, she had dropped out of existence.

Her acting, or actions, at this time would, had he been able to observe them, have been fully satisfying to him.

XIV

ONE cannot drop from the clouds, very highly colored clouds at that, and not experience a shock. A shock Miriam most certainly did experience!

For a whole week she was as one stunned and unable to get up. Apart from her infatuation, the contrast that marked life with and without Hilliard was so sharp that it became, at times, unbearable.

On several occasions, as relief, she decided to return home. She was not strong enough for this, so she would,

when the impulse came, fortify herself by the thought that as she did not come to New York on account of Hilliard, neither should she leave New York on his account.

And always she contrasted this life she had been leading, this life in which the flesh-pots were overflowing, with the dull round of life down there, and felt herself absolutely incapable of the heroic enthusiasm that her existence at home would entail. Along with other desperate determinations, she tried to forget Hilliard and all the delightful experiences that he had afforded her. But in her effort he became a magician, and there lingered a subtle charm that destroyed not only her power to efface him but her peace of mind. She also tried desperately to write. She shut herself up for days doing nothing else, but every line she penned seemed under the keen, discriminating eye of Hilliard and fear of his criticism absolutely robbed her of power. She would go down for dinner with a headache and on her return tear up what she had written.

But she never failed to register her experiences. While Hilliard might rob he also gave, and as she had entertained no fears about the outcome of her book, she entertained no woman's fears about the outcome of her passion. As she had no doubt of the sun emerging through clouds to shine for the world, she had no doubt of herself emerging from her present clouds to shine for Hilliard. Some day, she knew not when, he would send for her, if only to get on with his book. She knew only too well that that was, at any rate up to the present moment, her sole meaning for him. And then she would have him!

She did strange things at this time, avoided people, especially Belle Sheridan, who, she felt, was watching her. She rode ceaselessly in taxis, often passed places in which Hilliard had entertained her, with the hope of catching sight of him. Then she would remain indoors for days at a time under the fear that a message might come for her from him and find her out. One night,

after one of these periods of imprisonment, she had herself motored to the park. There she got out and entered on foot.

The night was dark, the sky uninteresting. She looked up rather wildly for clouds, stars, the moon, any scenic effect, but nothing greeted her, only a dull, colorless, far-distant roof that it seemed to her might fall with a roaring noise as when a strong wind blows. She almost wished that this might be, as though to be destroyed by its fall, and so rid her of her yearning for Hilliard, would be a relief.

For a while she stood in one of the broad paths, feeling baffled, abandoned, a lost soul. And then she began to walk, quite swiftly, with uplifted head as one admittedly lost, yet still defying the situation. Finally a policeman was approaching her and her heart beat at that, but he passed, paying no attention to her.

She had seen nothing up to this time with any sense of recognition, but she seemed awakened now and became alert. Suddenly her attention was attracted to a bench where a couple sat huddled in each other's arms. From that moment she could not escape these couples seated on benches and huddled in close, sometimes languid, yet oftener fierce, embraces. It astonished her; she was almost alarmed by such a strange and unexpected sight; it even caused her a feeling of revulsion. It was the girls and women who appeared to her to be most abandoned to these stolen caresses: they were, as it were, indulging in secret tipplings of electricity that these men administered, while the joy of the men seemed to consist in the administering. Miriam shivered. A new world had opened to her, a world of people feeding upon what she was also called to feed upon. It was as though her time had come. For what? She was not sure, but it alarmed her.

She passed on, registering thoughts and impressions that she resented, yet couldn't escape, and that she felt would leave scars on her. She felt hard, bitter and resentful and these feelings ended

in disgust of life and the strange, complex influences that moved the world she inhabited. She retraced her steps, eager to be back in her room, where she could shut out things and return to herself. She was walking rapidly, her breathing a little quickened and with a feeling—Miriam always saw herself—that her face was a bit illuminated but also coarsened. Suddenly a little way off to her left a high rock confronted her. Something about it seemed to not only attract her, but to hold her. In that moment the heavens split, the moon appeared and the solitary figure of a man standing on top of the rock, at the verge of it, looking out, was revealed to her. There was tremendous comfort, an awakening for her in this, a wild sort of uplift that put her back in her own place. She wanted to rush over, climb that rock, stand by his side and tell him that she, too, was capable of standing alone on a bare rock in the dark—capable of looking down! She felt elated from that moment—strong, capable, capable of Hilliard—of subduing him and standing above him. . . .

She took an open carriage at the entrance of the park, and with her face pale, wearied yet ablaze, had herself driven to her hotel.

To reach her room she had to pass one of the little reading-rooms, and there, as it had seemed to her recently was invariably the case, she saw Belle Sheridan, as she thought, watching for her. She tried not to see her and flit past, but the older woman called to her.

"Are you," she asked cynically, as Miriam entered and confronted her, "enjoying your experience?"

For one instant Miriam felt her heart leap and her feminine claws protrude. She was in a highly nervous state, every fibre of her taut to the snapping point. She wanted to spring and scratch, but it was constitutional with her to right herself, to ride over rather than break through the waves.

"Just at present," she said with a nervous laugh, "I am rather staggered by it. I like it, though," she added lightly; "if I was being burnt with

red-hot irons I would enjoy recording what it felt like!" And with a defiant glance she swept on to her room.

It had taken effort, though, and she was very tired when she found the door closed on herself. She didn't deny this, and with a rather unsteady gait she walked over to the mirror and looked at herself. She saw with an inward start that her face had narrowed and was blazing.

Suddenly at her back she seemed to see Hilliard, an amused smile on his lips, his face reflecting his aloof personality charged with that potent cynical indifference that had maddened so many women and in this moment was maddening her. All his masculine demand on feminine weakness, feminine abandonment, was in this vision of him. Her head literally swam with memories, memories of afternoons and evenings replete with novel, even extravagant experiences, whereby she had been forced into the position of spectator of him in every conceivable attitude that might render him attractive to her.

Suddenly her mind rested in his apartment, her head swam anew and she experienced a feeling of terror of it, as though it was possessed of an undertow that would drag her in, engulf her. There was one gleam here of the "experience" she had vowed to revel in through Hilliard. It was the delightful feeling that as far as she could see the only thing left her was to let herself be dragged in.

"I believe," she said under her breath as she turned and began to wring her hands, "I am going crazy!"

XV

THERE are storms of the soul just as there are storms of the sea, and they are as vast and terrifying. One withers and is as naught in the face of such stupendous typhoons and tornados of feeling; they toss and tumble one with a cruelty that almost touches the sublime. And, like their prototypes of the watery waste, they die down in the end and let one sleep, and when one

awakens in the morning all is calm and clear again, and the most distant objects are seen with extraordinary sharpness and brilliancy, as if the intervening air had been washed and polished.

It was so with Miriam on the morning after her torturing travail of spirit. The storm had passed; a calm lay about her; the sea of her soul was tranquil once more. As the stilled waters reflect the panoply of the heavens above them, so she could see in herself a vivid reflection of the dominating personality of Hilliard. She saw him, indeed, more accurately than she had ever seen him in the flesh; she saw him for the relentless vampire, the steel-hearted vivisectionist, that he really was. But she entertained, queerly enough, no resentment against him, no detestation of his voracity, no contempt for the man. In sober truth, the very hardness and harshness of him, now so brightly visible, attracted her a good deal more than they repelled her. Here, after all, was the sort of man she desired, the only sort of man she could be said, in any intelligible sense, to be capable of loving. Here was her natural mate, if mate she was destined ever to have. Here was the male that she could understand and appreciate.

For Miriam, remember, was quite as artificial a creature, in her separate way, as Hilliard was in his. The ordinary, decent, well-meaning, right-thinking, diligent, laborious, conscientious man did not interest her. He seemed as solid and as stupid to her as a sonata by Hummel, an editorial in the *Nation*, a slice of Stilton cheese. Her taste was too high for such flat flavors; she demanded, above all, a definite pungency, an assertive individuality. Hilliard, the brilliant and remorseless vivisectionist of women, with his skin of silk and gold, his striped eyes that flashed and penetrated while they sneered, his hands that meant so infinitely much, his caressing, ingratiating voice, his vague air of Latinism and decadence—for this Hilliard, despite all his crimes, she could yet harbor a hearty admiration and feel an al-

most irresistible inclination. He had wounded her, he had flaunted her, he had grossly misused her, and yet—well, he was still Hilliard, he was still the man of genius, he was still Somebody.

She admitted the massive fact of his fascination of her frankly to herself: it was useless to try to dispose of it by giving it soft names. More, she was glad that it was so. It would have been quite impossible for her, and she knew it, to satisfy her nature with a man whom she wholly respected—that is, respected in the everyday, the purely human sense. With her, to love was to detest, at all events, in moments of sober analysis. With her a lover was a lover—and good men, alas, made bad lovers! In Hilliard she had instinctively sensed, for all his reticence and aloofness, the lover of her ideal, and she was determined to pursue him, capture him and bind him to her chariot's wheel. In this moment, with her personality at full tide, she wished she could rob him of his wealth, transfer it to herself, and so make him her dependent, bent to her every whim. She saw him solely as hers, bound to her by law. There even lurked in her mind an intention to wreck him, and the idea was not born to-day but several years before, when she first began to read his books, and to dream of the woman who would dominate and even persecute the weak, cowardly, cruel hero he had invariably depicted, and whom, in mind anyway, he had caused to wreck so many women. . . . With such thoughts rampant in her mind she was as calm as a soldier going to war. . . .

Ever on the *qui vive* for a word from him, she gave a quick glance, on getting out of bed, at her room door, under which her mail was pushed every morning by some unknown servitor. She picked up the scattered envelopes, patted them into a regular deck, and shuffled them idly. The usual circulars (carefully disguised as private letters) from Fifth avenue shops; a note from an old acquaintance down home; what was probably an invitation to dinner

from a woman living five doors down the hall. And then, at the bottom, a letter from Hilliard's publishers—from the publishers whose select company of authors she, too, so ardently hoped to join. It was brief and business-like, and immensely agreeable. It told her, in five sentences, that her book had been found acceptable for publication, and that it would be brought out, barring acts of God and the public enemy, in the first batch of Spring novels. In conclusion, it offered her terms in figures that were quite meaningless to her, and invited her to call to discuss them the next day.

Here was triumph! Here was the crowning and culmination of her dearest hopes! And yet, when she looked back upon the moment after it had fled, she was surprised to note how deficient it had been in thrills—how little, after all that waiting, the first words of success had moved her. She slipped the letter into one of the pigeon-holes of her little writing-desk, and went on with her morning toilet. It was not until she stood beneath her shower and felt the sharp shock of the cold water upon her back that the full significance of the business dawned upon her. It came in a flash. She had not only sold her book; she had laid a new and inordinately subtle snare for Hilliard!

It was, indeed, as if aid had been proffered her that would make absolutely sure her conquest of him. She experienced a sudden and violent excitement over this confirmation from without of what had always been her view of herself from within. She laughed aloud, a strange triumphant exultant laugh, as she thought of all this, and saw herself in splendid costumes that her excited mind began to conceive: a modern Cleopatra with this modern Antony throwing away his life work, as the real Antony had abandoned his fleet, for her sake. If she had ever questioned her own power she certainly did not question it now. In a flash she saw herself the successful novelist with Hilliard at her feet, serving her as women had served him. She exulted

sentimentally in this retribution, feeling herself the avenger of Belle Sheridan and of all those other women who had suffered through him. It seemed to her that Hilliard was prostrate already before her, and very deliberately, with a triumphant snort, she planted her heel on his imaginary breast.

XVI

It happened that at the moment Miriam was thus exulting in the privacy of her virgin chamber, Hilliard himself was suffering vast disquiets in his gorgeous lair.

A letter equally as fateful, but infinitely less exhilarating, had come to him by the same post from the same publishers. It stated, in brief, that they were glad to be able to report that they could see their way clear to give him more time on his next book, which they understood to be going somewhat heavily—that they had fortunately happened upon a first novel of such distinguished merit and so sure to be a success that they were quite content to make it their Spring leader, and so allow Hilliard himself until the Autumn for the completion of his labors.

The publishers said more. They said that the young author whose first novel they had, by their traditional alertness, so felicitously discovered and brought into their hands, a lady named Miriam Reese, lately of the South, had evidently made a careful and profitable study of his own works, and that she had presented a psychological analysis so closely resembling those he had fathered that thefeat bordered upon the astounding. In point of fact, they continued, she had used for her subject what appeared to be a composite of all the heroes of all his books—a series of gentlemen, they reminded him, with many salient points in common—and there was a strong possibility that the critics, properly aided by suggestion, would discern the fact, and so manufacture a sensation. Such a sensation, they begged leave to remind him, was not to be ignored in the present de-

pressed state of the book market, nor was it wise to postpone its loosing unduly.

At the conclusion of his second reading of this extremely polite, but highly disconcerting letter, Hilliard stood stroking his chin. He was in his morning clothes, clean-shaven, elegant, outwardly calm, but within raged fires that turned from rage to exasperation, and from exasperation to something alarmingly akin to terror. His face paled, and then flushed, and then paled again, and he began to tremble like a petted Pomeranian that has been thrust from a warm hearth into the chill winds of a back porch. Hilliard knew these symptoms; he had observed them in himself in the past, and more than once; they were precursory of the violent passions that all artists, whatever their shell of reticence, are periodically exposed to and floored by. It was his own case they had begun far back in the nonage, and continued intermittently, sometimes under the pressure of exigent cause, sometimes almost spontaneously, at intervals throughout his life. They came upon him as a sudden and acute fury that amounted almost to temporary madness, and during the progress of which his conduct was extravagant, uncontrollable, and often quite ludicrous.

Hilliard feared these outbursts as an epileptic fears his fits, but his very fear appeared to make him helpless against them. When the spell descended upon him he had to give vent to the roaring fires within him. In the present instance, he suddenly tore the offending letter into shreds, rushed to a window and threw them out, and then leaped and stamped about the room like a wild beast. From one wall he tore down and destroyed a costly print by Hokusai Nakajima Tet-Sujiro; from another he jerked a pale Munich lithograph. From the chimney piece he swept a Copenhagen vase; from the music-rack of the grand piano, the sonatas of Mozart, bound in vermillion leather; from a table a Swiss wood-carving representing Lohengrin in the swan-boat. He even exhumed from a

drawer the manuscript of an essay on modern Flemish novelists, and crumpled it into an ungainly ball. . . .

Such storms of the spirit are of necessity, as has been before remarked, of short duration, and following them always comes a profound calm. When this one was over—it ceased as suddenly as it had begun—Hilliard stood amid the wreckage, trembling slightly and a bit dazed and sheepish, like a child after a thrashing. In a moment or two he was completely restored, and his mind turned to an analytical consideration of the situation confronting him.

First of all, of course, his publishers were to be restored to sanity. His novel, to be sure, had been going slowly, but he could speed up and push it through. By Christmas, at the latest, it would be ready for the monotypes; by March it could be on the stalls. And secondly, this preposterous young woman from Atlanta, this impudent wench of the coarse, chestnut hair, was to be relieved of her triumph, and brought back to his chariot wheel, where of right she belonged, and all of her tribe with her. He would reduce her, he promised himself, to a pulp—nay, to a mass of undifferentiated protoplasm. He would teach her her place. . . .

But at the moment, as he presently admitted to himself uneasily, she undoubtedly held advantages. It was as if, with her hand in the small of his back she were ready to topple him over. Talented persons—those who acquire art without the accompanying inspiration of greatness of spirit—succumb easily to all manifested power. In spite of the elegance of his supreme superciliousness there lurked in Hilliard that spirit of toadyism that had controlled his life in a way, and made of him a society man shining in the reflected light of social satellites rather than a bright satellite himself among artists. Unaided by the wealth that had placed him in a position to dally with art, he might never have become an artist at all. His gifts and talents

it is all too easy to conceive, might have made of him one of those parasitical quasi-males who adorn society, and, as a rule, fall victims to the inclination of women able to sustain just such insinuating and, from certain standpoints, satisfying men.

In spite of Hilliard's proposed onslaught he was, therefore, in reality recognizing that Miriam was one of those very women. By some remarkable transition he felt her distinctly reversing the order of things. Her rich and splendid personality had from the first taken his strength, and forced upon him unexpected shoals. He recalled gloomily that only the first chapter of the book of which she was to be the heroine had been written, that as a decipherable object she had eluded him, and that from an over-consideration of her from the standpoint of her interest. Was it possible that this woman, who stood her ground so superbly, would not only put aside—a most unparalleled thing in the history of Hilliard—the publication of his book, but bring him to her feet as well?

These thoughts were not clearly defined; they were rather feelings than thoughts. He dismissed them, rose, took a studied pose for a moment, during which he lightly held his chin, walked over, touched a button, told Kakubo to order his car, and had himself driven to his publishers. Having found them, to his great surprise, obdurate, he returned in a vindictive frame of mind and penned a note inviting Miriam to dinner, no doubt with the intention of venting his petty spleen upon her and effecting, at any rate in her own mind, her effacement.

Who knows (for Mr. Hilliard, after all, was no ordinary personality), but that, had she responded readily, he might not have, at any rate to a certain extent, held his ground? The day was Thursday. With that invariable righting of herself after any supreme impulse, Miriam named in her reply to the invitation the following Thursday as her, for him, first available evening.

This, it may be mentioned, required

what might be declared superhuman strength on her part. . . .

XVII

THE room into which Miriam was invited—designed by Hilliard to rob her of all sense of familiarity while he kept her waiting—was strange to her. It was one she had not been treated to a glimpse of on her former visit.

So pale was its tone, so delicate and blended were its effects, that it was as though she had stepped into a mammoth, softly illumined shell. It was so permeated with his presence, so suggestive of mingled warmth and coldness, that it was not difficult for Miriam to feel herself in contact with a part of him. It seemed to her that the touch of him was beneath her feet and in the milk-warm air. She felt a bit awed, as Hilliard had intended she should, and as she looked about her the entire place seemed to become electrically charged. If she changed her position she was attacked by the desire to close her eyes. If she accidentally laid her hand upon anything, electric shocks, fiery yet deliciouss, passed over her.

The fumes of burning incense began to grow stronger. The Japanese servant entered silently and touched buttons that brought into relief swinging lamps of gold above low couches of white velvet that looked like carved snow. All was passion here, but passion of the intelligence rather than of the senses, the kind of passion to which the creative mind most easily responds, the kind that the true artist, first of all, finds most difficult to resist.

Miriam was charmed, a far more dangerous state of mind for her than one mirroring mere sense stimulation. When the servant had retired her eye fell upon a gold cage in which a little canary slept. The sense of composure was complete with this sight, and the silence about her seemed to deepen and materialize. Not only could she hear it, she could feel it.

She was beginning to wonder whether or not she had slept when with the

same soundless tread the little Jap re-entered, drew aside some very wide, deep portieres of heavy, silver-embroidered white velvet and revealed, in the distance, Hilliard. . . . He sat, in the reflection of a scarlet light at his ebony table, writing. . . .

It must be said for him that, as had been his stage effect, his pose was perfect. He wore a house-coat of maroon velvet, even more becoming than the evening clothes that had become established in her mind as the effect of perfection, and he projected for her benefit, persuasively and without effort, that there was but one writer in all the world—himself. It was splendid, and Miriam did—how otherwise, since she was human?—succumb.

With that silent pen in those distant elegant fingers she granted forthwith that there was but one supreme novelist. In her own room she had pressed close upon him with her own supreme personality, pressed also on the ground that she, too, was a writer. Her personality appeared to her now, as compared to his, a mockery—the idea of her being a writer, insolence. Hilliard scored.

The incense now had her in a cloud; the little bird had awakened and had its tiny shining eyes upon her; the Japanese, more silent it appeared to her than the motionless bird, was arranging a decanter and glasses on a table nearby. She wished he would disappear, that the bird would sing and she would scream. She stood up a moment, but as quickly took her seat, surprised, as she glanced at the table, that the Japanese had gone. All her power to be herself, to analyze and triumph, had departed. Her eyes traveled languorously to Hilliard, still passing that silent pen over paper, the movements of which began to strangely agitate her. There came over her the humiliation of abandonment to this strange agitation, abandonment of herself to this moment of wild feasting of eye and feeling. Suddenly she was attacked by an acute impulse, the impulse to drag herself over and touch, if only with the point

of a finger, this marvelously enigmatical man.

She began to wonder about the strange invisible something that was pulling on her until resistance became momentarily more difficult—this something that almost lifted her into action and that did cause her to bend forward. It was very curious, her sensation. She began to feel the inclination to laugh, to spring up, leap over and catch at the pen whose constant movement was now putting the entire place in maddening agitation.

As Hilliard laid it down suddenly and stood up, a smothered cry escaped her. With that cry Miriam had weathered the storm. . . .

She was herself again, and Hilliard merely her rightful possession.

XVIII

WHEN he stepped forward to greet her he instantly recognized her mood, and attributing it quite naturally to the acceptance of her book, decided to open fire on her at once and so capture her.

Having taken her evening wrap, a rather ornate affair, purchased under the auspices of Belle Sheridan during a debauch of shopping soon after their acquaintance, he stood, still with it in his hands, regarding her. She wore a costume of pale yellow of Grecian design which caused her to blend so perfectly with Hilliard's selected environment that in spite of the fact that he was acting a thoroughly rehearsed part, he was for a moment transfixed.

Six weeks of trial by publicity, and enforced separation from him, together with the past week of self-control, had greatly changed her since their first meeting. She might, in the present moment, be said to resemble the out-of-door rose transplanted to the hot-house. Some of her virile leaves had whitened, her coloring, in fact, was far less vivid, and, as has been remarked, she was slenderer. In other words, she was a being whom suddenly aroused and fiercely controlled passion had partly consumed. Mr. Hilliard was not slow

to notice this, and to understand it.

A close study of her manuscript, obtained in the morning from his publishers and which he had devoted the day to, had shown him a highly sensitized, resplendently egotistical personality, one who naturally expected all lesser personages, as had so far evidently been the case, to bow down before it,—one that would never succumb to his former methods of slow poisoning, but must, if reduced to his purpose at all, be subjected to quick stabs in relentless succession.

Having, with movements of graceful precision, laid aside her wrap, he turned to her with rather affectionate patronage.

"My publishers," he said, "tell me that on account of your having in some strange manner depicted me as the hero of your book, in spite of its crudities; in fact, in spite of its not being in the classification of a book at all, they intend to publish it."

He seated her beside him on one of the white velvet couches.

"That is most interesting!" he went on. "How did you come to do it?"

"By," answered Miriam, "a close study, I suppose, of your books. I was from the time I read the first one dreaming of the woman who would make a new heroine for the hero you invariably depicted. The dream had to take form. But," and she decided to begin to thrust the woman of her on him, "is that," her head tilted to one side as she pretended a sly glance, "the only reason they are going to print my book?"

"It is the only reason—a sufficient one, they seem to think—they gave me," answered Mr. Hilliard, to whom a lie was as pleasant as a bonbon to a child. "Do you," he then inquired, "not find it a sufficient reason?" And he bent forward and laid the hand of maddening magic upon her own.

He saw her start, saw her eyes close. But the next moment they flashed, and calmly freeing herself of a touch that meant to her all that a human touch can mean, she got up, and having taken

a few languid, studied steps, seated herself in a large armchair opposite him.

"I wonder," she said, while the effect of him as he came forward and stood over her to press his advantage, and did so, as a faint gasp from her attested, "if it would surprise you to know that I am not especially affected by the acceptance of my book. First, I expected it to be accepted, and, second, I am not ready to be affected by it!"

"You are very pale," said Hilliard, attempting to thrust upon her the sense of weakness, "may I offer you something—a glass of wine?"

"No, the feeling that gives me the pallor," and she smiled, "if I am pale, is one I do not care to forfeit. I will tell you, though, what I *would* like!"

"Do so," said Hilliard, conscious of the contour of lips that appealed uncomfortably to him, lips that he had rather, in the moment, lay his mouth upon than write of.

In some strange manner he seemed to feel his famous magnetism as a kind of boomerang reacting on him. There came over him the consciousness that there was something in this girl that might, after all, prove too much for him. He felt weak, in fact, as though his mental poise and all that he stood for were deserting him. He began to be irritated at this, and for a moment feared an outburst similar to the one of the morning. Was it possible that this girl, who persistently refused him a manifestation of her emotions, who could resist even his electrical touch, could be dreaming of his conquest as her lover?

Hilliard, the great author, smiled, but it was a smile of the lip rather than of the brain. If his splendid environment had momentarily subdued her, her splendid personality was momentarily, at any rate, subduing him. It was, in fact, a moment of fear, fear that, as though he had caught her intention, he had become the instrument rather than the performer of the symphony he had conceived. He again experienced the irritation that might burst into rage; it seemed to him that while he was

being thus attacked from within, she was estimating him from such a standpoint. It was just from this standpoint that Miriam *was* regarding him—how she was to make him her slave.

Finally she spoke.

"I would like," she said thoughtfully, "to spend my time here in the other room on that davenport where we first talked. That is why," and she rose to display herself, "I wore this dress. Do you like it?"

"Very much," answered the great author, distantly and with a renewal of anger at her apparent contemplation of advantages, and weakly deciding to deny her the davenport.

"I like the dark purple blue of that room," she half-breathed as she closed her eyes and put back her head, "it seems to melt into one, while that yellow davenport covering burns!"

When her voice ceased she kept her pose, holding her head back with closed eyes, presenting to him her face, in this moment of passionate ecstasy, this moment of her arrival, as a lovely flower.

And Hilliard, as she was so potently demanding that he should, *was* overcome by it. He failed to speak, and finally without intention or volition, also without touching her, he bent forward and fastened his lips to the mouth that Miriam, with that strange intuitive knowledge of what would, in the circumstances, appeal to him, had stained a deep blood red.

She took the kiss without a movement, without a breath. When it was over she opened her eyes as from a trance.

"It was all," she said presently with a far-off smile, "so beautifully finished!"

"Finished?" asked Hilliard.

"Why, yes, that you are mine—the end of my dream, you know, that is to become a reality—that you are to be *really* mine!"

She surprised him then by a laugh, that laugh of hers that came to her as a part of her consciousness, the laugh that had echoed in her own room alone, that had rung perplexingly in the ears

of Belle Sheridan, and that had made people look at her when as a little girl a sudden consciousness of the wonder of light or air or a flower came to her—any wonder. Now the great wonder had come, the man wonder, the wonder that was to pile all her senses in a heap and make them leap and ring and fade only to grow vivid again. It—this laugh that had always been her answer to things—thrilled into nervous joy as she stood up and faced him with her arms apart and her face burning like a golden rising sun.

Hilliard could only stand back and look at her, this virile shining creature facing him unafraid.

She went up to him.

"Mine," she breathed, "to do what I will with—will with—do you know that?—what I will with, bound to me by law for my delight!"

Hilliard suddenly looked alarmed.

"What do you mean," he asked bending forward to peer at her, "by *law*?"

"Why," and she stepped back, giving a swift glance about her, "that we are to be married—that I am coming here to this beautiful place, that you have been for years preparing, *to live*!"

A laugh, not one that matched her own, but a very genuine laugh for Hilliard, broke from him. Also, what was most unusual, a flush leaped to his cheeks and burned beneath glowing eyes. He was very handsome in this moment, the wild stag run to cover, the uncaptured man about to be captured, and Miriam felt anew all the wonder of him as a possession as she fearlessly held his eyes for a full moment.

"And what," he asked finally, "if I decline the wonderful offering of yourself for—" he paused and the old sneer was like an echo in his voice—"my delight, the utilization of my personality to provoke it for you? What if I decline the honor of being tied to you by law?"

"You won't decline," she answered with purposeful defiance, "it's all been decided long ago!"

She swept past him, took her seat on the couch she had surrendered and,

with her body bent forward and her eyes ablaze, brought him to her side. He attempted lightness, a lightness of manner, as he took his seat.

"Do you know," he said, "that you are a very interesting girl? Tell me now, what has been defined?"

She refused his banter. For a while she sat still in her bent position, now with her wrists thrust between her knees and her eyes away from him. Presently she turned slowly and fixed them, full of hatred and full of passion, upon his face, remarking as she did so all the chaste delicacy of it, its wholly masculine cleft, the wonderful finish of it that the world calls aristocratic, that peculiar delicacy that only generations of refined effort can produce. She looked at him as one looks at a rare old violin that has been highly polished and put in perfect order for the performer, looked at him dreaming of the music of him—music of him for her. And then she smiled.

"What has been defined?" she asked in a low voice. She thought a moment and seemed to brighten. "Why," she said, "that I am the answer to you—the answer," and the deadly look of hatred came again, "to your past, the answer to Mrs. Sheridan, the little Annette, and all the rest of them! As they gave of themselves to you, you will give of yourself to me! You are to be as helpless against me as they were helpless against you!" She stood up and with a half-sleepy glance about her, again opened her arms. "And this," she said under her breath, "is the place your subconscious self prepared for our experience."

He got up with a light laugh and caught her wrist.

"And what," he again asked, "if I refuse?"

She looked insolently into his eyes. "You might as well tell me," she exclaimed in a low voice, "that the sun will not rise for my benefit, or that the winds won't blow for me, or the stars come out! I hate you—I even despise you, but I love you, and you are *mine!*"

For a moment those strange blue

eyes of hers, blue with their mystery of grey, eyes that were like patches of clouded sky, looked into his, striped like a tiger's, as through a veil. For a full minute they held him spellbound, hypnotized, unable to shift his gaze from them or move. And then very slowly, as slowly as a curtain descends upon some marvelous spectacular stage scene that is thus entralling an audience, they closed; her head swung dreamily back, and the painted lips were once more presented to him.

Mr. Hilliard fought. He read his doom in them, an eternity seemed to pass, an eternity of him lost, and then, as before, without a movement of the hand to touch her, he bent forward and drank into the innermost depth of his being the poison of them.

As Miriam's eyes opened, she looked in his face and laughed. . . .

XIX

AN ordinary year passes quickly enough, but not so a year in which moments are eternities.

At any rate, eternities seemed to have been lived by Miriam Reese Hilliard as she sat a year later at her desk beside one of the finest windows of her husband's apartment, with her eyes fixed on the park.

Mrs. Hilliard had been writing since early morning. Both her publishers and the public were clamoring for her second promised novel. In the afternoon she was to give an interview concerning it to Mrs. Sheridan. She was pondering upon what she would say as to this burning book of hers, a record of her experiences through contact with a famous author.

In an adjoining room the famous author sat. A large leather armchair had been recently purchased for him and he occupied it. Across his rather skeleton-like knees lay a morning paper. Although a picture of his wife was upon the front page, it seemed to have little interest for him. He had a time-table in his hand that he appeared also to have forgotten. The time-table had

been brought to Mr. Hilliard because his doctor had rather peremptorily ordered that he go to Florida—he and Kakubo—for a couple of months at least. As a matter of fact, his physician may have been right as to his advice. Mr. Hilliard was not looking well. His pallor had about it the quality of the burnt leather of the chair he occupied, his eyes also had a somewhat burnt look, and a patch of gray hair, vivid as a streak of white paint, had appeared near his brow.

He seemed to be thinking, but one might suggest that he found this diffi-

cult, for he suddenly appeared nervous. Quickly but mechanically, as a machine works, he lit a cigarette. It finished those of his gold-lined case replenished since breakfast. His eyes began to travel with quick, restless glances to the heavy crimson, gold-embroidered portieres that shut out a view of the adjoining room.

Presently they parted silently, and Kakubo entered with the split of champagne that he had ordered:

The hour was eleven in the morning, and already it was the third. . . .



NANCY

By George Briggs

HE sent her an elaborate and magnificent
Box of chocolates.
As his father was the owner of a flourishing brewery,
He showered her with bon-bons,
Which she accepted, thanking him formally.

If he had sent her a case of beer,
She would have kissed him.



A LOVE letter is a list of highly improbable things written to an entirely imaginary female, but usually addressed to a sunburned girl with a snub nose.



KISSING is the artificial creation of a partial vacuum which is promptly filled with trouble.



EVERY woman has some vice. Some giggle, some freckle, and some get fat.



MY LOVE

By Alice King

MY love's name is Mary Ann. After innumerable Hélènes and Dorotheas, several Eleanores and Kathyrines, after—if I mistake not—at least one Isolde—my love's name is Mary Ann.

Her nature is sanctuary after the passionate experiences of life. She listens quietly and with sympathy to everything I have to say. When I say nothing, she is silent. Her kisses are as cooling dew after midsummer heat. Words fail to describe the daintiness of her physical semblance. I am not a modern Solomon.

Her sweet red lips have never tasted liquor. Tobacco she considers a privilege distinctly masculine. She does not care for society, but would rather sew, or read aloud, than gad about. Her clothes are ageless—always sufficiently in style, but never extreme. She makes them herself.

My love's name is Mary Ann.

We will marry, when I am released from Bloomingdale.



IN THE CITY

By Charles Divine

JUNE, and a street winding to the river:
I wandered down and June walked up to meet me
With sunlight and zephyrs
Abducting the sweets of a garden close,
Conjuring visions of roses and tulips and daffodils,
But especially roses.
Suddenly a placard before me on a loft factory:
"Rosemakers Wanted, Apply Borgonzi & Einstein, Third Floor."
And I asked myself:
"Has God gone out of the business?"



WHEN a woman ceases to pucker when she kisses, she loses her amateur standing.



THE DIARY OF A SKELETON

By Robert McBlair

I WAS awakened one summer morning several years ago by hearing a woman's scream. It was during a house party at the Wentworths' country place near New York, and my room looked out upon the lawn. Jumping up and going to the window, I saw the woman, in the black dress and white cap and apron of a maid, running toward the house, screaming and waving her arms.

Hastily throwing on a dressing gown, I ran downstairs and met her. She became hysterical at once, but pointed toward the summer house. I caught the words, "Mrs. Temple," so leaving her in the hands of some of the servants who had gathered round, I ran on to the little octagonal shelter that she indicated.

As soon as I had passed the railing and put foot on the porch, before my eyes, face down, lay the body of Mrs. Temple. She was dressed in the London grey evening gown I had seen her in the night before; its filmy grey scarf lay over her shoulders and wound itself round one bare, rigid, extended arm. A black pearl earring had come off and was lying near her chin.

I turned her over. From out the filmy grey gauze of her dress there protruded the thick end of a glass stiletto where the blade had entered her left breast and the handle had snapped off. The handle of the weapon was nowhere about.

As I stood and looked at her, several other of the house guests came up. The next thing, then, was to take care of two of the women, who fainted; and I remember that they had been resuscitated and assisted to the house before

Wentworth, fully clothed, finally arrived.

We telephoned for the coroner, who came at once, and that afternoon the inquest was held on the verandah.

The Wentworths' summer place was a green and undulating spread of beautifully thought-out grounds, enclosing in its centre a white house of pure Colonial design and of almost Gargantuan proportions. In the early summer the house was always full, and, due to Jane Wentworth's exuberant interest in people, you generally found among the guests more than one fascinating combination of personalities.

On the verandah at this meeting there were eight, or maybe a dozen, couples. Among them, I remember a certain well-known actress (and suffragist) and her manager. There was a musician or so, a couple of writers, an architect, a popular artist, and a liberal sprinkling of business men, with their wives. But looking back now, the mind focuses on three persons in particular: Jane Wentworth, with her boy-like figure, rich coloring and brilliant dark eyes—a nervous, temperamental, intense girl, beautiful even in any disarray of out-of-doors. Then there was the Italian violinist, Paglio. He didn't have long hair, nor did he affect low, soft collars and flowing ties; but even in a simple sack suit he suggested the opera-bouffé Italian; his dark skin and waxed moustache, his ardent gestures and sparkling eyes, threw over him the cloak of type. But there was nothing comic about him. Last of the three, and the most admirable to my mind, was John Wentworth, whom we called "Johnny" because it was so inappropriate.

ate. He was a straight, upstanding, blue-eyed attractive fellow, with what you would describe as a "strong face"—a chin that was unmistakably a chin and a nose that might have been taken from one of the ancient Greeks. He had made most of his money himself, but yet had a smashing serve, and knew how to laugh.

Opposite this group of guests the coroner's jury, made up of the semi-rustic natives of the county, sat gingerly on the spindle-legged chairs that had been brought out from the ballroom.

The inquest itself was a horrible thing. Suspicion, like a burning flame, shot here and there among us. Paglio was the only one who might have had a motive; he had been terribly jealous of the woman; but he showed that he had been playing billiards until late in the night. Then the little, sharp-faced, cross-eyed coroner bared his tobacco-stained teeth and, turning his crafty look on first one and then another, wanted to know who had been with the woman last.

A rustle, barely audible in the silence, went over our group as each one of us involuntarily moved a little and stole a glance at Wentworth. The unanimity of it was damning, and the little reptilian coroner's eyes lightened, as a scientist's might when some hoped-for convolution of elements silently adjusted itself in the test tube.

"I see!" he squeaked gloatingly, before anyone had said a word; "and what time was this?"

"I saw Mr. Wentworth with Mrs. Temple." It was Jane Wentworth who spoke now. Around her eyes, even on the lids, the skin was dark; her eyes were feverishly bright, but her face was pale. "They were on the lawn beneath my room, about eleven o'clock. They had some disagreement, and Mrs. Temple walked out towards the summer house. Mr. Wentworth then came right up to me, and I've been with him ever since."

John Wentworth, his face very set under our glances, merely nodded his head.

The coroner gathered up his papers. "We'll go over to my house to reach a verdict, men," he said grimly. "Seems to me like this here is a case for the grand jury to look into."

And they filed off the verandah and down to the road, leaving each of us reluctant to meet another's eyes.

Well, the grand jury did "look into it." But no evidence could be gotten, and there was never any prosecution. But the business, nevertheless, had exceedingly unpleasant consequences. Every one of the Wentworths' acquaintances immediately announced, with conscious rectitude, that he or she did not intend "to give them up" just because of this. They thought "the Italian did it, anyway." But people drift away from places where they are uncomfortable. And, as the Wentworths would never discuss the matter, when one was with them he felt oppressively that at any moment something would be said to cause embarrassment. Anyhow, they lost touch after awhile with the old crowd, they gave no more house parties, and towards the last sold their place and took to traveling in Europe.

Something over two years later, the news of Jane Wentworth's death caused but passing interest in the midst of a very busy social season. But the whole matter came back to me with great vividness when I got a message at the club one afternoon that Mr. Wentworth would like to see me at a certain private hospital.

I went up there at once. Although expecting to see him ill, I was shocked at the difference in him. This was not the ruddy tennis player, but an esthetic-looking invalid, very white and languid. But the impression that I took away with me was not of a character undermined, but of John Wentworth in his old strength of will, with an infinite tenderness and sweetness added. Give a man to take care of a woman or a child that he loves, and you may make an angel of him.

We talked of Jane at first. Or rather he talked of her, and in such a way that

she seemed to be alive and just about to enter the room. And I got soft sidelights on her highly tempered, ardent nature that truly were revelations.

After a while he grew fatigued and turned to the occasion of his summons.

"When I am dead"—he silenced with a smile and a listless movement of the hand my banal interruption; "when I am dead, you must take this diary and publish it."

He drew from under his pillow a rather worn, limp book in black leather binding, and handed it to me.

"She made me promise that you or somebody should do it. It was almost her last word."

We were silent for some moments. His blue eyes were staring up at the ceiling. Then, with diffidence, but as if in this last opportunity he wanted to share his happiness with someone, he said: "The last thing was: 'We can thank God, anyhow, that He gave us each other—can't we Jack?'"

Tears began to run down his face. I got up very soon, shook hands with him, and left without saying anything.

Three days later I heard from the hospital authorities, and I began immediately to recast the artless narrative so that all of the complicated motives could be seen clearly. And now the Wentworth's family skeleton speaks out, explaining away for all time the mystery of Mrs. Temple's death.

That part of the diary in which we are interested takes us back to a point about a week prior to the fatal night. Wentworth then did not know that Paglio's affections really were centered on Mrs. Temple, but he knew that the Italian liked to be with her; he did not know that Paglio had been seeking out Jane Wentworth lately merely in order to get consolation and advice in his suit to the other woman; so he upbraided Jane for letting the Italian be so "attentive" to her, whereat Jane, in the pique of innocence, laughed at him. And the origin of all the trouble lies in the fact that Wentworth came upon Paglio and Mrs. Temple in the con-

servatory when he was fresh in anger from this interview with his wife.

Paglio was leaning over Mrs. Temple, talking eagerly as if persuading or pleading, and Wentworth walked in on them simply on the impulse, but half conceived, of retaliating a little against the Italian by an interruption.

Not that it was not a pleasant move in itself, for Mrs. Temple unquestionably was a fascinating sort of woman. She had the look of an Oriental—an Egyptian: a long oval face, large gray-blue eyes, black hair, olive skin—the kind of woman, you might imagine, that Antony laid down his world for; the kind of woman, no doubt, that many a more ambitious hero has strangled with her hair—a curious league of intellect with sex.

Paglio bit his lip and fell silent at the interruption. When Wentworth sat down by Mrs. Temple with some light remark, the Italian flushed red with annoyance, made as if to say something, then turned without a word and walked rapidly from the room.

Pleasantly surprised at the success of this attack upon the fortress of his supposed enemy, Wentworth, in the flush of victory, continued to exclude the Italian by monopolizing Mrs. Temple. And she lent herself readily to the game; maybe to be entertained by exploiting Paglio's jealousy; possibly because she refused to be used as a foil, and determined to make Wentworth pay in real devotion for essaying the attempt.

Whatever her reasons, Paglio—that ultra-emotional combination of Latin and musician—countered by throwing all of his violent nature into an effort to prove himself independent of her and to revenge himself upon Wentworth. He gave his time and attention patiently and ardently to Jane; and Jane, having quarreled with John before about him, felt committed to keep the business up.

As the days passed and Jane and the Italian were engaged in an apparently mutual, and obviously intense absorption for each other, John Wentworth,

as the diary shows, passed through all the seven hells of jealousy, ending by taking to wine and by pursuing (or submitting to capture by) the lady of the blue eyes and olive skin.

He failed absolutely to realize the essential perversity of the situation. A person of simple emotions, having loved Jane from the first, and before knowing her being subject to but the mildest affairs of sentiment, this shock of her apparent defection swept him from his philosophical moorings, and out into a tempest where he was lost even to a comprehension or control of his own faculties. Feeling thus, he could not be himself in her presence; feigning ease and naturalness, he acted coldness; and the result upon Jane, who knew the other woman's type, can well be imagined. One could have been no more surprised than was Wentworth when he afterwards learned the suffering through which Jane passed, and the desperation with which she endeavored to make her affair with Paglio seem a diversion, instead, as it was in truth, a refuge from unbearable humiliation.

As to the Italian, so far from perceiving where the man's affections really lay, Wentworth even looked up his financial standing, to see whether, if the worst resulted, he was able to take care of Jane. And, preposterous as it may seem, that week Wentworth telephoned his lawyer to arrange to transfer certain bonds to Jane's account, so that if she chose to go with the violinist she would be independent. Not till the evening of the tragedy did Wentworth get any true conception of the state of affairs.

After dinner on this last evening, Wentworth and Mrs. Temple—both of whom had been drinking wine—strolled through the library and sat down in a little secluded Turkish corner near the long windows that looked out on the lawn and the summer house.

The woman was in a devilish sort of humor, Wentworth has it—provocative and elusively encouraging. Yet when he caught her wrist and kissed her smooth bare arm above the elbow, she

slapped him smartly on the face and partly got up, leaning half crouched against the cushioned side of the nook like a cat about to spring, the gray scarf drawn somewhat across her face and her even teeth bared in a smile of something like derision—a challenge to a contest of will or brawn.

His smarting cheek and her cunning defiance fired him. He sprang up and caught at her. She struggled sinuously at first, but as his strength prevailed, drew her soft arms round him and yielded her mouth.

Immediately, though, they both heard a noise near them—a choking sound in a man's throat. Turning hastily, they found Paglio standing in the library door.

His face was as white as paper and was contracted into a horrible expression of mingled rage and jealousy and hate. For a moment, Wentworth fully expected an attack. In fact, the man started towards him; but then, suddenly throwing up both hands, he whipped about and returned rapidly through the library.

Wentworth turned to Mrs. Temple and found her trembling. She sank down onto the divan and pressed her handkerchief against her pale lips, reaching out a hand to draw him nearer.

He was alarmed.

"Are you ill?" he demanded. "Can I get you anything?"

"He frightens me," she whispered.

"Of course he is—jealous."

"He is mad! He will do anything!"

Suddenly the man's distraught white face shot home to Wentworth, and he thought of Jane. He knew that he must go to her at once.

"I must go to Jane," he told her; "I must go to Jane."

She grasped his coat.

"You can't leave me!" she cried. Her eyes held almost a prescient terror.

He disengaged her hand and started off. She sprang up and reached out to hold him, but he caught her wrists and flung her away.

"I will come back at once," he promised her, and ran through the library.

He had thought that Jane had shaken his love to its depths, but even this tentative unformulated danger to her filled him with a sickening sensation of fear. He found nothing of her or of Paglio in the hall, so he passed into the conservatory. They were not there, but as he came out again he saw them in earnest conversation near the foot of the stairs.

The Italian was doing the talking. He seemed to be describing what he had seen, and Jane was listening with eyes staring ahead and lips parted, a queer strained expression on her face.

She looked up, and as she saw Wentworth coming towards them, went suddenly paler, and leaving Paglio abruptly, turned and started up the stairs. The Italian glanced over his shoulder before passing into the billiard-room; Wentworth got a glimpse of eyes and moustache vividly black against ivory skin.

Wentworth and Jane had barely spoken for several days, but now he called to her.

"Jane," he cried; "wait!"

She turned her head, looking to him almost like a stranger in her paleness. Seeing that he was following, she picked up her skirts and ran up the stairs.

Wentworth knew then that the Italian had told her. He did not know what exaggeration the man had made, or what interpretation he had put upon a harmless incident, so he sprang after his wife, determined at least that she should hear his side of the case. But before he could reach her, she had run into her room, slamming and locking the door.

He rattled the knob and called to her.

"Jane! For God's sake let me see you. Open the door."

There was a sound of her throwing herself on the bed, and after that, silence.

Wentworth was sick with worry. He paced the hall, going again and again to the door and trying to get his wife to answer or let him in. Finally, as a maid was coming along the hall, he

walked towards the stairs, and then suddenly thought of Mrs. Temple.

The terror that he had seen in her face came back to him, but he was not greatly concerned. In fact, as he thought of her sportive intriguing, he lost sight of his own responsibility in the matter, and dwelt upon her with a glow of anger as being largely the cause of his unhappiness. He would not have cared much at that moment if harm had come to her through the Italian, and he went down the steps slowly, sauntered through the hall very much like a rebellious child, and entered the library.

His eye was caught by the glass stiletto on the long mahogany table. Even to his ordinarily placid nature, the round slender weapon, as it caught and held the light in a hundred minor undulations of its surface, gleamed a suggestion of imminent and tragic use. He stopped at the table for a moment, then went on towards the corridor and the Turkish corner.

The woman's eyes were wide with fear as he came upon her, but when she saw it was only he, she collapsed a little, sank down again upon the divan and began weeping into her hands, quietly.

"Come," he commanded; "let's get out of this."

He took her arm and led her from the hall and onto the veranda.

It was here that a couple, passing in from the lawn through another entrance, saw them for a moment, framed in the oblong of light thrown on the veranda floor.

Wentworth, fearing that they might be joined while his companion was yet distraught, led her out into the moonlight of the lawn. Then, knowing that he was beneath Jane's windows, and hearing a movement at her lattice, he continued till they reached the half shadow of the summer house, where they sat down.

Both were quiet for quite some time. Wentworth was moodily gazing over to Jane's darkened windows, wondering just what the Italian had said to her. He felt that this was really the crisis

of the intolerable conditions that these four had made for themselves. He feared for Paglio's influence upon her, and was thankful that she was quiet in her darkened room.

Just then the light sprang against her curtains, and in a few moments he saw her shadow as she put on a cloak. The light went out again.

The suspense then was unbearable. Where was she going? His impulse was to rush to her at once; but with a grimness of will he held himself. If she was going to the Italian—let her go. He would ask or demand nothing.

The woman beside him laid her hand on his. He let it stay there for a moment as he turned and looked on her in a sudden gust of fury, though in the darkness she could not see his face. Then, to control himself, he got up and walked to the far end of the octagonal shelter, where he stood, jaws clenched, and stared out to where the round moon laid writhing bars of silver on the pond.

He stood there for several moments, the diary says, until a little sound behind him made him turn.

A man's figure crossed the moonlighted part of the floor. He saw a knife flash and sink, and heard it snap. The woman's body slid from the seat and began to move about on the floor with uncertain rustlings. The man had darted out again and was crossing the lawn, running.

Wentworth was kneeling by the body instantly, and there he paused for half a moment, undecided whether to go first for help. But his hate for the Italian rose within him like a fever, and he found himself on the lawn, racing after the fleeing shape.

While he ran a thousand thoughts flew through his mind. He knew that this man, while loving this woman, had paid his fervid court to Jane—and maybe had made her care. He noticed that the running figure had adopted some flapping coat and a felt hat as a disguise. As he saw that he was gaining he felt a sort of exultation; and as he thought again of the man's perfidy, and of the way that he had played with Jane, the rage that had been swelling within him rose like a tide.

A hundred feet this side of the big oak tree, the pursued one slipped and fell. He scrambled up, but no sooner had he regained his feet than Wentworth reached him.

He turned, at bay, and Wentworth, seeing the arm raised, dived into a grapple and brought his soft and almost unresisting quarry to the ground.

He felt for the throat, but paused at a breathless voice in his ear.

"Jack! Jack!"

Raising his head, and looking into the eyes of his captive, he recognized his wife.



SOCIAL activity may be defined as the maintenance of an expensive home and several motors with the object of having someone else buy your dinners for you.



ABREACH of promise suit is the pathological result of a sudden trance having as one of its symptoms automatic writing.



THE BALLET RUSSE IN EAST SEVENTY-SIXTH STREET

By Richard Fletcher

I

IT was to be Mrs. Nicholas Veck's night of nights. For twenty-five years she had steered and labored toward it, as to some far-off divine event in the revolutions of the spheres. The supreme realization of her dreams was at hand.

Years and years before, a little girl swinging on a picket gate in a second-rate suburb of Chicago, she had made up her mind to shimmer and shine some happy day in the *grande monde*. Her goal was New York, and to its attainment she had devoted a pertinacity illimitable and an ingenuity of the very highest order. How she had striven and longed for the day of inevitable surrender—for Mrs. Veck never doubted herself for an instant—when the best society of the metropolis, stormed and conquered at last, would take her unto its chilly but opulent bosom! And what a transformation was seen now! The little Minnie Thompson, of the bleak Chicago *faubourg*, with her pinafore of navy blue, her freckled nose and her meagre pig-tails, had become the superb, the stately, the rich, the aristocratic, the sure-of-herself, the beginning-to-be-powerful Mrs. Nicholas Veck. And today her triumph rose up dazzlingly before her.

This present chronicle need not be burdened with the detailed history of her long and arduous campaign. She had submitted heroically to abominable slings and arrows—to the stare of unseeing eyes, to snickers, to libels, to deliberate and cruel snubs. She had

trampled rough-shod over old friends, and had raided and pillaged their temples of affection. She had established secret lines of communication in Paris and London. She had employed spies, whoopers-up, insinuators, brokers in invitations, *agents provocateurs*. On the barren wastes of the North Atlantic, oscillating endlessly between Fishguard and Sandy Hook, she had captured many an important trench and stormed many a salient redoubt. She was an amiable bridge-player, particularly when losing; an easy and even brilliant conversationalist; an expert in the subtle duties of the hostess. It was by the sea route that she approached and assaulted Newport. It was a chance duke, snared by strategy on the tubby old *Baltic*, who brought her finally before the gates and bastions of New York. Her siege of that capital, once begun, lasted many years. It had its disappointments, its surprises, its depressing reverses. But Mrs. Nicholas Veck stood by her artillery undismayed. One day a breach appeared in the wall. The next day she entered the city. Her stupendous patience and audacity had won.

When victory was thus in her hand she decided to build a palace, fill it with the purchased loot of the Old World and make it the scene of a thanksgiving ceremony to which only her new friends would be invited. With this end in view, she bought some precious property in East Seventy-sixth Street and consulted an architect, whose knowledge at once became secondary to her own belligerent originality. To

gether they scanned the rocky, dismal lot. She refused to demolish an old stable at the rear. Against his advice she insisted that it be converted into a theater, and this idea upset his plans of a square Roman *palazzo*. During the months of their professional intercourse the architect's nerves gave way, and he ended in a sanitarium. Single-handed, she completed her mansion, and her toy theater was its most entrancing feature. Finally she was ready to occupy this castle of her dreams. She supervised magnificently the tedious task of moving. Several sturdy workmen collapsed under her commands. She maneuvered the whole undertaking with the herculean strategy and decision of a field-marshall.

Of course, all this building and buying and bickering and shouting of orders led up to her one staggering purpose of giving an entertainment in the theater which would advance her at one stroke from a mere sheep in the flock to the bell-wether. So she sent out cards which bore the simple but extremely tempting suggestion: *One Hour*. Only that: no more.

Mrs. Nicholas Veck, for all her imperial expenditures, had a decent sense of economy. No one could get more for her money than she. She substituted for mere extravagance a vast shrewdness and intuition. Cunning lurked in the dimples on either side of her pretty little mouth. Her face was small: her eyes a greenish-gray. The nose was well cut and the nostrils had a way of distending under the stress of her vitality. Her brown hair was always beautifully dressed and so was her full, graceful figure. She was compact.

A young and struggling soprano, consecrated to singing sad ballads of medieval France, was badgered into accepting a fee of fifty dollars. There had been a lament from the singer that this scarcely covered the cost of her costume, and that the bill for the latter ought to be sent to East Seventy-sixth Street. Mrs. Nicholas Veck made a firm and derisive refusal. Then she

sought the services of a comedienne whose New England humor was a popular lure to the tired business man. It was during an evening performance when she entered the dressing-room of the star. The interview began placidly enough, and Mr. Veck (there was a Mr. Veck) was rejoicing in the wings of the stage because no loud voices interrupted the turmoil of the changing scenes. Poor Mr. Veck! It was only the lull before the storm. His wife began by saying many charming and patronizing things about the art of the other woman.

"Never, not even in Paris," purred Minerva from the luscious brocade of her cloak, "have I seen an artist half so gifted. What a sense of comedy you have, my dear! You simply must come to my house and do your monologues. My friends will be enchanted."

Then they approached the bunker of dollars and cents. Mrs. Veck did not waver. She offered two hundred dollars with as much confident magnificence as if the sum had been twenty thousand.

"Two hundred dollars!" screamed the great artiste. "Well . . ." She paused for breath and refinement. Both were withheld, so she repeated, "Two hundred dollars!"

"Yes," confirmed Mrs. Veck cheerfully. "And I shall send my car for you."

"Well, I never in all my life!" began the other. "I get two hundred dollars for a ten-minute bit with the film people. But no movies for mine. I just plod at my art. And as for the automobile—well, I have one of my own."

They argued, they wrangled. Mrs. Veck jumped the price to two hundred and fifty dollars. The eminent actress was shrill with resentment and hurt pride, but her stage wait was ended and she escaped from Minnie by a grudging capitulation.

Much easier was the lady's next victim. His name was Hector Howard, and he was a writer of erotic verse in the imagist manner—an eloquent

apostle of the higher depravity. The catchpalls of the Society for the Suppression of Vice were forever on the trail of his publishers, and the sale of his thin volumes was steady and enormous. After a good luncheon with Mrs. Veck at the Plaza, during which he had broiled sweetly in her smile, he was quite ready to read four poems from his latest book, "The Virtue of Sin," for almost nothing. He forgot, indeed, to mention any price at all. Mrs. Veck, always thoughtful, remedied his oversight by putting him down for twenty-five dollars.

Then her path converged with that of M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky, the Russian dancer. M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky, clad in the green blouse and heavy cowhide boots of a Russian *moushik*, danced nightly at a cabaret four steps off Broadway. His mazurka was the delight of connoisseurs; he drew tears by his symbolical interpretation of the boat-song of the Volga boatmen; on great nights he enchanted the illuminati with exquisite snatches from Moussorgsky's "La Khovanchina" and Debussy's "L'Après-midi d'un Faune." M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky was of humble but honorable origin. Born to the surname of Jenkins in Peoria, Ill., and baptized Grover Cleveland at the orders of a father who aspired to some petty post under the Cook County bureaucracy, he had danced his way up to fame by the lowly route of small-time vaudeville. Once he had been Jack Alsace, of the soft-shoe team of Alsace and Lorraine. Then he had become Mons. Flamingo, a delineator of the Paris Apache. Finally, the times changing, he had settled down as M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky, of the Imperial Opera at Moscow, and under this appellation he now cultivated his chosen art. He was a tall, dark young man, with a round face and fine brown eyes. The threat of embonpoint showed at his middle, and to this menace he was inordinately sensitive.

Mrs. Veck had made herself familiar, through her agents, with these simple facts of the distinguished Russian's

life, and so, when she approached him at his place of employment, it was with a characteristic assurance of manner. First she contemplated him leisurely through her lorgnette of diamonds; then she beckoned him royally to a secluded table; then she mentioned her name and her desire. M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky readily fell in with her plans.

"Sure," he said. "I have heard about you."

"Just so," said Mrs. Veck. "And now to business. I am giving a tiny little entertainment at my house in January. I think I might find a place for you on the program. Maybe you could get up something really new for us."

M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky meditated, and Mrs. Veck took stock of him. A nice young fellow, she decided, but one with a certain shrewdness, an unmistakable air of knowing what he was about. She would have to be ingratiating.

"I needn't tell you, of course, that such an appearance would help you a lot. A large number of very rich people will be there. If you make an impression on them, it should be—"

"Sure," said M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky. "I know it. I don't mind dancing for you. That is, if—"

Mrs. Veck's eyes suddenly glittered, and she put on her best smile.

"That is very kind of you," she said. "And what sort of dance do you think of doing?"

M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky hesitated for a moment and then explained.

"I've had it in my head," he said, "to do one of them classical things—what they call a dance-poem. A friend of mine put me onto a good idea. Would you stand for some A No. 1 classical stuff?"

"It would be quite all right," said Mrs. Veck.

"Well, then," said M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky, "I'll tell you the idea and see if it gets you. You know who Anemone was, don't you?"

Mrs. Veck did not, but she nodded

grandly. M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky proceeded to explain.

"Anemone was what they call the wind-flower. Do you get me? You see, he was one of them Greek shepherd boys in the old days, and him and the North Wind loved the same girl. The girl thought that Anemone looked best. I guess the North Wind was too cold for her. Them old-time nymphs must have been some girls."

"Yes, yes," interrupted Mrs. Veck.

"Mr. North Wind decided to eliminate Anemone," continued the dancer, "so he didn't do a thing but just blow him to pieces. Well, that's my dance. Great wind effect—action. And, you know, he was turned into a flower. Can't you see it?—raging tempest—dancing shepherd—death struggle.

... Why, listen, that would be a knockout! And I'm the boy to do it."

Mrs. Veck, by these simple words, was lashed into an excited prospect of her green and orange theater set for the idyll of the wind-flower.

"It must be a garden scene," she decided with vivacity. "Bright sunlight—and I shall have electric fans installed to blow on you from either side of the stage."

"Yes, yes," agreed the dancer. "That's fine and dandy. And if you could let me have a bust—a Greek kind of thing. And just put the dance down on the program as Anemone. Sounds classy, all right, don't it?"

Mrs. Veck winced. The picket fence and the blue pinafore were very remote at that moment. There was no vulgar row over money. M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky's large brown eyes were fixed on opportunity. So he accepted, almost without thought, her offer of seventy-five dollars.

II

THREE weeks later, at 7:25 p. m., Mrs. Veck turned on the lights in her stable-theater, which was decorated boldly in emerald green and orange. Huge upholstered sofas formed rows of seats, and the white velvet curtain

of the stage was stamped profusely with gaudy circles in the manner of Léon Bakst. On her tour of inspection she was accompanied by her husband and a retinue of assistants.

"Is everything all right, Minnie, dear?" faltered Mr. Veck, as he followed his sumptuous spouse up the stairway which led to the stage.

"Don't bother me now," she said. She turned to the young man who was acting as stage manager. "There must be flowers in the ladies' dressing-rooms—have you seen to that? It puts them into better humor. I want that monologue girl to make them laugh themselves to death."

She stooped in spite of her stays to test the galaxy of electric fans. She looked up and inquired.

"There must be no mistake about the right moment to turn on these fans. The Anemone dance is the big thing on the program."

Her assistants bowed docilely. Each knew full well the awful penalty of an error.

Before midnight the guests arrived. Everyone was there—the sprightly brides and their wealthy husbands—the young married set, with its enterprise and rudeness—a few débütantes, fresh as field flowers—their fat mothers—a sprinkling of older women in dark brocades, whose names were household words to the readers of *Town Topics*. A few artists had been invited, but most of the men were as conventional as the new white gloves they wore. The infinitely important Mrs. Arlington crawled languidly up the stairway. On her thin, olive-skinned shoulders there seemed to rest eternal responsibility. Her dark, sad face was now smiling mournfully upon Minnie. Mrs. Arlington was very fashionable. Moreover, she was supposed to be one of the cleverest women in New York, and she resented this newcomer who presumed to give an entertainment of a kind associated with her own hospitality.

"Am I very late?" she asked, emphasizing her intention by her apology.

"Not a bit," replied Minnie amiably. "We haven't begun yet. Nicky," she called out to her husband, "take Mrs. Arlington to the theater."

"One Hour," sounds so amusing," Mrs. Arlington drawled. "So improper, too, my dear. I hope not—my young sister told me she was coming."

"Why improper?" Mrs. Veck was on the defensive.

"Only my little joke." Mrs. Arlington tugged at her shoulder-strap. "You know, of course, 'Three Weeks,' 'Five Nights,' that sort of thing. Forgive me."

She walked on only a second before little Mrs. Veck hissed, "Cat!"

As Minerva surveyed the audience she was indubitably pleased. There had been a few disappointments—noting serious—and she went back to the dressing-rooms to get further assurance from the stage manager. All the artists had arrived. The quintet of stringed instruments played an incomprehensible trifle by Debussy. And then the flagrant curtains were caught up and the poet in evening dress was seen flanked by two enormous Italian candlesticks. Thick wax tapers cast a mellow light on his pale, medieval face, and behind him was a semi-circular curtain of gold tissue. There was some interest in this sonorous reading of "The Virtue of Sin," but Mrs. Veck's pleasure was interrupted by the apparition of M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky in a florid dressing-gown. He began in a whisper,

"Where's the bust, the classical bust, for my act?"

Mrs. Veck looked at him. He was holding the Nile-green crêpe of his kimono to prevent undue revelations.

"Yes, the bust—well, isn't it there?"

"It sure ain't," answered the dancer.

The stage manager was sent for. He disclaimed any blame, and, finally, with her happy inventiveness, Minnie thought of a bust which stood on a pedestal in her husband's den. This was sent for. It proved to be the head and shoulders of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

"Who is that old gink?" demanded M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky suspiciously.

The stage manager revealed the identity of the patriarch.

"What!" cried M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky. "The First Reader poet?"

Mrs. Veck hastened to reassure him. No one, she argued, would recognize the poet, nor, indeed, pay any attention to him whatever. All eyes would be centered upon M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky himself. His art would work its inevitable enchantment.

"But the whiskers!" exclaimed the unconsoled dancer. "Whoever heard of whiskers in a classical dance?"

Mrs. Veck, as always, was resourceful.

"Oh, well," she said, "that part is easy. Cover him up with vines. Here, Jones"—to the stage manager—"get some smilax. I am sure this young man will make garlands to hide the beard. Will that be all right?"

M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky, mollified, not only consented to the remedy, but even aided in its administration, and Mrs. Veck turned with relief to the ballad-singer, who was really charming in her huge conical hat, with its peak hung with sky-blue gauze.

"One Hour," in fact, was going like wildfire, and Mrs. Veck, back in the wings, was settling down to the enjoyment of her triumph. Suddenly the lank poet slid up to her and began whispering into her ear.

"Have you seen the Russian?" he demanded.

"What of him?" answered Mrs. Veck, alarm shooting through her.

"I mean his costume," said the poet. "I have just had a cigarette with him in his dressing-room. Ye gods and little fishes!" Mrs. Veck's tiny nose sprang to attention. "They won't stand for it," the poet went on. "I must say I didn't know I was going to be on a program with anything like that. My position, you know, in the literary world—and it was only to do you a favor that I came here at all."

"What do you mean?" Mrs. Veck's hands sought the support of her rows

of pearls to brace herself for the menace of scandal. She scented danger ahead.

"Well, his costume is just about the size of a postage stamp. He is just the nakedest thing I have ever seen."

"You don't say so, Mr. Howard." Minnie lapsed into the suburban vernacular of earlier days. "I'll see him about it this very minute." She was gone, crackling with pearls and energy.

"Mr. Jenkins, Mr. Jenkins," she cried as she knocked insistently at the door of his dressing-room.

"Yes, come in!" answered M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky.

She did. He was sitting before the mirror, scattering some sort of unguent on his black hair.

"Great Scott!" screamed the hostess. "Is that all you are going to wear?"

He stood up. Impervious to the usual surprises which life offers, Mrs. Veck now surrendered to dismayed astonishment. The shred of magenta which arrayed the dancer was as thin as gauze. The tunic barely reached to his knees and one shoulder was completely bare. The other was clasped by the gaudy silk, and the waist was bound tightly by a belt of gold tinsel. He was unashamed.

"Why, don't you like it?" he asked.

Minerva quickly looked away.

"Like it," she cried, trembling with rage and terror, "like it! Why, it's indecent, it's awful, it's disgusting."

She retreated to the open door before the nude legs of M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky.

"Well, I am sorry you don't like it. I think it's very artistic myself."

"Look here, Mr. Jenkins, I am not going to have it, and that's all there's to it. You have to put on a whole lot more, or else you don't appear before my guests to-night."

"Why, I never heard of such a thing. What do you expect me to wear for 'Anemone?'" M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky insisted petulantly, "a fur-lined overcoat?"

But Mrs. Veck by now was calling for her stage manager, and it was a

wonder that her strident, horrified voice did not penetrate the auditorium. This down-trodden assistant was ordered to rush reserves of veils, scarfs, bits of stuff, shawls and table-covers to the scene. But M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky stood his ground.

"I wouldn't add a stitch," he announced firmly. "Believe me, Mrs. Veck, this is perfect as it is. This is the classical stuff."

And he executed a pirouette to point out how airily he regarded the matter.

"You're paid to come here and entertain my guests, not to shock them. Why, there isn't a yard of material in that thing."

"Oh, well, if that's the way you feel about it," M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky was bowing, "I'll put a fillet on my head."

"My God!" said Mrs. Veck, and then she lost her temper. What she said about Russian dancers caused the medieval ballad-singer to seek the uttermost corner of her dressing-room, while various footmen of the household hid their laughter far from the greenish eyes and listening ears of the little tyrant. The dancer's voice interrupted her.

"Now I guess I have had enough of this." M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky became the great artist. "I'll go on that stage and dance before them people or else I'll know the reason why. I have your letter to prove that I was engaged to do a classical dance and, by gosh, I'm going to do it."

"I shall dismiss the audience. I shall tell them to go to supper."

"Then I'll sue you for breach of contract and damage to my professional reputation."

"You wouldn't do that."

There was appeal now in the usually authoritative voice of Minnie Veck. She had visions of the law courts, the publicity, the scrap of magenta tunic, and, above all, Sybil Arlington's rapture over this grotesque catastrophe.

"How much will you take?" Minnie was quivering. "How much do you want to call it off? I simply can't have you go on that stage and disgrace me."

She looked up into his face as he leaned magnificently against the wall.

"Nothing doing."

There was savage gloating in the voice of M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky.

"I ain't no bum Tom actor," he continued. "I'm an artist, and money won't buy me."

"Five hundred dollars," offered Mrs. Veck, a plain note of appeal in her voice.

"Don't bother me," said M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky grandly. "You annoy me."

"A thousand."

"Not for a million! Not for ten million! No sir-ee. I am here to do a classical dance, and I'll do it if it kills every old Moll in that bunch out there."

At this moment the music of Ravel began to issue from the orchestra—soft, clinging, lascivious strains that started in the fiddles and gradually spread to the flutes and horns. The overture to "Anemone" had begun.

"Here's my cue," said M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky. "Here's where I go on."

And then, taking a step toward the stage, he stopped suddenly and turned upon the terrified Mrs. Veck.

"And if any of them rough-necks of yours try to stop me," he bellowed, "I'll kick off what I've got on and jump out into the audience! Do you hear that?"

For once in her life Minnie Veck was cowed. What was to be done? There was an unearthly fire in the singer's eyes which held her palsied and scattered her wits. She fled across the stage and watched him, fascinated, from the opposite wing. He stood with the stage manager—why didn't the fool grab him, stab him, shoot him?—and the contrast between that functionary's suave dress clothes and the dancer's shocking nakedness made her reel.

As she did so her eye alighted upon the electrical switchboard. It was on the wall of the proscenium arch, and almost under her hand. She reached out blindly, and just as the curtain slid up and the unspeakable Jenkins pre-

pared to leap upon the stage, she began pulling lever after lever. One of the little black handles was the same to her as any other; she didn't know the workings of that switchboard; she merely knew that she wanted darkness, darkness, darkness! The footlights snapped out and then the borders above them and then two bunches in the opposite wings. The whole thing was over in ten seconds. Every lever had been pulled down but one. The stage was dark, save for three little amber bulbs in the flies. These lights cast upon the stage a shimmering and ghostly gleam. In it M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky writhed and pirouetted in his great delineation of *Anemone*, the wind-flower.

He seemed a fairy dancing by moonlight. . . . It was impossible to tell, even so close as Mrs. Veck stood, whether he was clad in a bathing-suit, in oil-skins, in coat armor, or in the skin in which he was born.

III

A HUSH had fallen upon the guests out front. At first Mrs. Veck thought it was the silence of resentment, of scandal, of horror, but in a moment she knew better. Cautiously she peeked out, and then she tottered down the little stairway which led through the proscenium arch to the auditorium. She glanced at the stage over her shoulder, and then turned full around. . . .

Through what appeared to be clouds of yellow-pink smoke she saw M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky dancing as in a dream. He seemed infinitely ethereal, remote, vague in outline. He was less a man than a beautifully undulating shape, a changing arrangement of curves and rhythms, the apotheosis of graceful motion. . . . Mrs. Veck had a quick mind, and she knew beauty when she saw it. In a moment she was standing spellbound, frankly gaping at the spectacle. It was as if the glories of old Greece had come back to a stable in Manhattan, as if Pan piped and danced again. The soft music of the orchestra scarcely reached her con-

sciousness. She was all eyes. A visual enchantment of the first rank was before her.

The audience sat in utter silence for fifteen minutes, and then, as M. Kasakoff-Orloffsky bounced off the stage there was a roar of applause. The stage manager, recovering his wits, turned up the lights. Guests crowded about the hostess. She was Alexandrian in her triumph. Her little nose was dilated; her eyes flashed fire. She

heard herself as if from far away:

"So glad you liked it. Yes, a discovery of mine. This is the first time he has done it. I feel that I am in great luck. It is so nice to see you enjoyed it."

To herself, once safe behind the door of her boudoir, Minnie Veck also had something to say, to wit:

"What a clever little woman you are! How many other women would have thought of that switchboard!"



SONGS OF HIS LADY

By John McClure

I

OH, I shall pluck the little stars
And set them in her golden hair,
And I shall pluck for her delight
All things golden anywhere.

The little flowers of the earth,
The little corals of the sea,
The little dreams within my heart—
My love shall have them all o' me!

II

And I shall weave into a net
The dreaming Pleiad sisters seven
With all the jewels of all the crowns
Of all the saints of heaven.

A net of stars for her to wear
To make her dainty and fair to see,
So all the princes of all the world
Shall whisper and envy me.

III

But she shall dress more strangely still:
In all men's eyes she shall be seen
To wear my little silver dreams
Like tinkling trinkets of a queen.

Ay, queen-like, she shall move them all
To adoration and desire,
For she shall wear my golden dreams
As though they were a robe of fire.

THE MANAGER

By Russell D. Janney

HIS name was the most widely known in America, perhaps in the English-speaking world. The tale was told—and doubtless true—that a letter had been mailed in Hong Kong addressed simply “George Wagner,” and had reached the office over the Columbian Theater on upper Broadway with scarce a delay.

The phrase “George Wagner presents” was coined in a dingy hotel bedroom in some small town in Ohio, the midnight of the evening on which he had assumed control of the manager-deserted, half stranded troupe of players for which during some five weeks he had led a precarious existence “in advance.” After careful thought he had used the phrase to head the handbill copy which he was going to have printed the next morning—and intended to distribute about the town himself. He was then but nineteen years old. In his pocket he had four one dollar bills and a dime.

Some two years later the phrase began to appear in the larger middle western cities, in St. Louis, in Indianapolis, in Cincinnati—and its authoritative dignity aroused a hearty ridicule. “George Wagner presents!” The provincial critics sneered and made puns just as their ancestral prototypes in England had scoffed at one Ben Jonson who had the audacity to publish his plays and call them “works.” Having written their column and obtained their laugh the critics passed into oblivion, but the butt of their jests, the phrase, persisted. “George Wagner presents.” Players, while also openly sneering, in secret and by stealth began to seek engagements under the slogan. They had

a guilty feeling that they were commercializing, were debasing their art. It was authentically reported that this name paid salaries regularly and that it never broke a promise!

One night the phrase appeared on a program in New York. Some ridicule here also from the Alan Dales of the day—but likewise some sober praise from the more discerning; from the critics who respected and loved their art. The next year it appeared on two theater fronts in Broadway during the entire season. And in an incredibly short time the despised “George Wagner presents” came to mean in the amusement world what “Tiffany” means to jewels, what “Krupp” means in ordnance. The name meant perfection—its owner the master hand of a vast, mimic world of his own creation. Strangely also it was still reported that its owner was just and upright and kept his given word.

Of the man himself—his appearance, his habits, his private life—few could tell. His close business associates would say nothing except to intimate that “G. W.” as they called him, “was a prince.” They worshiped him. Hearsay and history had gathered the few facts above—but they concerned mostly his name. His enterprises spent in round numbers fifty thousand dollars a year for photographs of his stars, his players, his productions, yet the man himself had never been professionally photographed. Once a reporter had managed to get a snap-shot as he came down the steamer gangplank from one of his yearly trips to London and the Continent. It was a bad exposure, developed into a sort of

nondescript blur, but they published it the next morning. At nine-fifteen the manager of the Wagner New York office called upon the editor. He came away with the camera plate, and the cut was never used again. Even the name was not in the telephone book or the directory, and he never gave appointments to strangers. So much for what the world knew of a figure as massive and appealing in the romance of American business triumphs as that of Carnegie or Rockefeller.

It is here permitted us to go "behind the scenes"—up two flights of well-worn stairs (there was no elevator) and to walk toward a door at the end of a short hall. On the door was a single word "Private." The main entrance was through the large business offices extending back along the passage. It is only with this private office that we are concerned.

Opening the door we find it is a small room, hardly twelve feet square. It was simply, sparingly furnished with a heavy, old-fashioned, roll-top desk of mahogany and two comfortable leather chairs. The chair at the desk was the usual pivoted type, swaying or turning as its occupant desired. Under foot was a rug of dark red—on the gray painted walls three steel engravings, with an enlarged photograph of the type known as "a chromo" and seen in the parlors of country towns, and under this a framed motto or text. The engravings were of Lincoln, of Grant and a view of the old Fifth Avenue Theater long since burned down. The enlarged photograph was of an elderly, gray-haired woman.

The woman's face was strangely fascinating, if one was interested in types. It was both noble and plebeian. The features were heavy—almost gross, but the forehead was high and the eyes wide apart and deep and expressive. Strength and a certain kindliness lurked about the mouth. The face was like a folk-song—inspiring and yet commonplace; the effect a baffling confusion of empress and peasant haus-

frau. It hung high on the wall directly above the desk. Beneath it was the oblong motto in a thin antique frame of faded gold. One somehow connected it with the enlarged photograph, as if the elderly woman spoke the words as you read them.

"Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before Kings; he shall not stand before mean men. Proverbs xxii. 29."

The woman was Rachael Wagner, the mother of George.

In outstanding and vivid contrast to this sobriety of background and furnishing were two objects on the green-topped desk. This desk was always left open, except when Henry, the giant colored attendant, pulled it down to dust the room each morning. One of the objects was placed there afresh each day by the negro—a single rose of a rich crimson—a rare variety to be secured only of a famous florist in Fifth Avenue and supplied one each day to the office of George Wagner. Its receptacle was an Italian vase of exquisite ware, an iridescent thing of as many greens and blues and reds as an opal. Even when the master was in Europe the roses came and went in endless procession. It was like an altar fire kept ever burning by the black servant.

Beside the vase with its red rose was a cabinet-size photograph in a frame of brilliant gold and silvered filigree. The photograph was renewed each year, the one replaced being laid in the upper left-hand drawer of the desk which had a fireproof metal lining and locked automatically. The photographs recorded the life of a beautiful woman—of a girl one might better say—for she was now but twenty-six as she gazed in lovely allurement from the filigree. The face was as well known in America as was the name of the owner of the office.

Of her there was no mystery. The press agents, the dramatic critics, the magazine essayists had for ten years proclaimed her the most charming, the most clever actress on our stage. She

had not been pronounced "the greatest"—she was not yet a Bernhardt or a Duse. She had (as yet) played only light roles—but of her future there seemed not the shadow of a doubt. No other player even approached her in popularity, in the box-office drawing power of her presence. Miss Kathleen D'Alroy, the best known of the some fifteen Wagner "stars."

But let us look at the man who had literally *made* her, who had moulded her artistic career as carefully, as lovingly, as far-seeing as ever sculptor created inspired faultless beauty from the shapeless marble shaft. His quick characteristic footstep is heard in the hallway as Henry, the huge negro, has just renewed the water and the rose in the vase, and has brought in the pile of personal telegrams and letters and placed them on the desk. A key is fitted to the lock outside and the door opens.

If one might see the faces of the personal servants of successful men immediately before they must face their masters there would be a true record of that master's littleness or greatness.

The eager face of the darkey expressed the devotion that a mother might show for the expected return of an only child. That George Wagner was a great and good as well as a successful man, that—and his office—amply proclaimed.

"Good morning, Henry!"

"Good morning, Master George!"

That was all, but as he received the hat and the heavy walking-stick the black man anxiously took in every detail of his master's face and figure, and satisfied himself that he was well in health and spirits. Then all smiles, the servant hovered about till the great manager, looking first at the pictures of the two women—the one above the desk, the one on the desk itself—and touching the rose very gently with caressing fingertips, was seated in the swinging chair and had plunged into the business of the letters and the telegrams.

II

GEORGE WAGNER was the son of his mother. What father had bred this Napoleon of the mimic world I do not know. He was dead before the son was old enough to remember. The Manager was in figure short, several inches under medium height, broad-shouldered and inclined to stoutness above the waist. The face was puffy, round and very fleshy, the features heavy and rudely chiseled. A double chin hid what strength there must have been in the jaw, for the power of instant decision was one of the ladders by which he had climbed to success. The mouth, fleshy lipped and ringed with fat, was kindly but could be firm. The forehead was high and broad, its height accentuated by a partial baldness. The eyes were far apart, rather small and brown, and as in the photograph of the mother, there was in them an inkling of the inner fineness and beauty of soul which the gross body and face failed to convey. Only the feet and hands had grace—the hands were patrician, strong but with the sensitive lines of the artist.

The man wore a double-breasted suit of dull material that seemed to exaggerate his almost deformed heaviness from the waist up. He wore no jewelry, did not even carry a watch. He was thirty-seven years old, but looked to be near fifty.

This man had started his career in a vocation notoriously slipshod and unstable, a fly-by-night vagabondage with no antecedents or precedents of stability or integrity. In fifteen years he had made his own enterprises among the most perfectly organized machines of modern efficiency, he had revolutionized a business, for he had even forced his rivals to give up the old mountebank ways. No factory, no chain of department stores, was conducted more carefully—no banker's word or bond was more reliable than that of George Wagner. The man's faculty for leadership, his ability as an organizer, his grasp of detail was stupendous. In

any line of endeavor he would have been a master. Why had he chosen to build his business castle of such perishable material as plays and players and on the sands of the theater-going public's fickle caprice? Because he was not only a business genius, but—in his soul—a poet. This was the one trade in which he found it possible to combine these two instincts. So intense was his activity and his concentration that he could never have worked in something at which his soul revolted in order merely to earn the money to gratify that soul desire. His livelihood and his recreation must be one and the same thing.

There was another reason. As recorded, the man was a poet—but a poet fettered and chained. He knew that he could neither adequately speak nor write the thoughts that surged and battled or tripped and whispered through his soul. He could only work, and he chose to work where he could infuse these thoughts into the minds of those who had freer lips and more skilful pens. He would sit in the garden of the English country home of one of his playwrights and say, "I want a play of Youth—of Youth that never grows old—such a play that because of this very Youth that it represents will be always youthful itself and can be revived season after season. I have an idea that the leading character might be a boy, but played by a woman—I can *feel* exactly what I want—I know that the public is waiting for such a play—and you can write it, Sir Arthur—"

This would be the beginning. George Wagner was the ugly cast-iron crank that set to revolving the brilliant steel built engine of his writer's intellect. His sense of "lines," of "situation" was perfect. "That is not the adjective," he would say. "It is too cold, it doesn't glow as that speech should glow—think of some other phrase—think—think—" and the speech would be evolved that brought the audience to the edge of their chairs. His greatest author once said to him when he had finished a play

that ran for two seasons in New York alone, "I have no right to put my name as author of this piece—it is yours—you have written it as truly as if your hand penned the words!"

George Wagner flushed crimson—he was keenly, most unhappily embarrassed.

"Nonsense—I have done nothing—a few suggestions which you would probably have thought out anyway—"

"I want your name then with mine as co-author and your name first."

"We will do no such foolish thing—I tell you I have done nothing. A plain business man like me a writer! It is a fine joke!"

So it was that just a few men knew the brilliancy of his mind, understood the marvelous modesty, the sensitive shyness of this rare, unselfish, efficient gentleman. As careful in his own business accounts as a bank clerk and equally exacting of his employees and associates, he cared nothing for money once it was earned. It was the visible measure of success, that was all. Aside from his modest needs it interested him only as a means of achieving new artistic triumphs. He had one extravagance—though he had no living relatives he carried a life insurance of two hundred thousand dollars. It was payable on his death to Miss Kathleen D'Alroy.

It is, after all, of his relationship to this woman that this record of a life chiefly concerns itself. Unlike him, she was "of the theater" for generations. The business that had never lost for him one little thrill of its romance, its peculiar charm, its opportunity for giving pleasure and enlightenment to the world, was to her the daily treadmill of the commonplace. Her mother and father were struggling players; her grandparents had been players in London before them. She had made her first stage appearance at the age of eight months, carried in the arms of her mother. At five years of age she was playing the child speaking roles. At fifteen she was the leading woman of the barnstorming company in which

her mother acted the "characters." The father had died one night on the stage of an opera house in a town in Kansas as he rollicked off as the *Jester* from the storm scene of "King Lear," —died of a bad heart, bad fortune and bad whiskey, and ambitions hopelessly past fulfillment. The girl could just remember it.

George Wagner first saw her when she was sixteen years old. The company had somehow managed to work its way as far "East" as Pittsburgh and was filling in a week at a cheap, back-street theater. George Wagner, who had the season before broken into New York with his first Broadway production, had come on that Tuesday for the opening night of one of his road companies at the city's finest playhouse. The baggage car had gone astray, and at the last minute the opening had to be postponed till the matinee of the day following.

It was one of the few occasions in his entire life that the brain dynamo of the man craved a respite. For a month it had scarcely stopped to eat or sleep—in fact, it had worked on while the body ate and slept. So, instead of returning directly to his hotel where the long-distance telephone and a satchel full of manuscripts and records awaited him, he decided to loaf for one entire hour. It was a quarter of eight—he would wander about the town till nine o'clock.

His unplanned stroll led to a badly lighted, ill-smelling street. On the corner a cheap saloon reeked with sour beer, and half way down the block a single glow of light from a wide entrance reached across the sidewalk and rested on billboards fastened back to back to the lamp-post at the curb. When he was near enough to get the outlines of the crude, highly colored lithograph, he read the yellow and black strip of lettering pasted diagonally across its center. It just hid the hands of a sneering dress-suited gentleman, whose fingers were apparently firmly grasping the throat of a pleading lady on her knees before him. The

letters spelled "To-night—*East Lynne*."

George Wagner did not laugh at the picture, instead something akin to a tear mist blurred his eyes. The poster and the name of the old play brought back memories of his early beginning when his had been just such a company and when the old piece had been the "meal ticket" of the repertoire. Obeying a sudden impulse, he stepped up to the little barred window and bought a seat in the last row of the orchestra. He went in intending to stay half an hour. He sat through the entire four acts.

It was Kathleen D'Alroy who had held him. First by her unusual beauty and then—in spite of the crude old melodrama and the bad acting—his unerring instinct saw in the girl's work the germ of real ability. That alone might have created an interest—his was a constant searching for undiscovered genius in players and writers. But in this instance there was something more. This man, who had only worshipped ideals, whose busy life had given him no time even had he possessed the inclination to transfer this love of the ideal into a reality in some fellow human being, was stirred by an emotion, by a love such as few men have the depth of feeling to know.

As he filed out with the meagre audience, a thin, down-at-the-heel, weak-eyed man in a very dirty dress suit was standing by the ticket window smoking a cigarette. He was evidently the company manager. George Wagner went up to him.

"Kathleen D'Alroy is the name of the young lady who played *Lady Isabelle* to-night, as your program states?" he asked.

"Right you are—and some beauty, ain't she?" the man nodded and commented as he spat toward the open door to the sidewalk.

George Wagner took out a long wallet from his coat pocket and produced a card. He was about to hand it to the man when his eyes fell on a ticket envelope on the small shelf in front of the box office window. He wrote a

number on the card, placed it in the envelope and sealed it. Then he gave it to the man in the dress suit.

"I would be grateful if you would give this to Miss D'Alroy and ask her to kindly telephone me at the number I have written. It is the Fort Pitt Hotel."

The company manager looked at the envelope dubiously. Then he glanced craftily at George Wagner, but something of the kindly ingenuousness of the man's massive, homely face awakened a long dormant honesty. Instead of the hint for a bribe he reached back the message.

"Look here, Mister, I'll tip you off straight," he said. "There ain't no use trying to make no dates with Miss D'Alroy. Her mother is the character woman and wardrobe mistress with this show, and she never lets the young one out of her sight."

George Wagner smiled. "Give the card to her mother first, if you wish," he said. The road manager's good intent had not escaped him. He took from his case another card. "I appreciate your—tip," he added. "If I can sometime be of service to you let me know."

The man looked at the name—stared—dropped his cigarette, and opened his mouth to speak—but George Wagner was gone. With his two cards the "East Lynne" impresario dived back into the already darkened theater and excitedly sought out a tall, slender, stoop-shouldered woman who was packing costumes in a trunk at the middle of a bare stage behind the lowered curtain.

"My Gawd! Mrs. D'Alroy, who do you think was out front to-night—and I've got a message from him to Miss Kathleen!"

The woman continued her work without even looking around. "You're drunk again, Jim Manley," she said. "How many times must I tell you I won't have Kathleen take mash notes sent by insulting traveling men—go on back to the front of the house where you belong."

The man seized her arm and held out the envelope in his other hand. "I reckon maybe you'd best let her have this note—the gentleman didn't look insultin' as you say and perhaps you've seen his name onct or twice—George Wagner, the manager—he says to telephone at the Fort Pitt Hotel in the morning—"

The woman raised a tired, care-worn face to this messenger, in which there was still a trace of beauty, a face into which struggled an incredulous gleam of hope.

"You're not fooling me, Jim Manley!" she said, and the voice trembled.

"Read it yourself—and here's a card he gave me!"

The woman tore open the envelope and read. Something swelled up in her heart, something choked her throat. Tears filled her eyes but she was smiling. A dozen years seemed to drop away from her face and her shoulders.

"At last, thank God! A real chance for my little girl!" she said brokenly.

III

GEORGE WAGNER had walked rapidly back to his hotel. One of his lieutenants was waiting—nearly frantic with two hours of trying to locate him—there was an important telegram to answer. But the Manager waved him aside and went directly to his room. He was fighting out the greatest crisis of his career. He wanted to be alone and to think.

For three hours he paced the floor. The man who had always known instantly, instinctively what to do could not decide. He had always gone after and won the fine things which he had desired and he desired this beautiful woman more than he had ever wanted success or power. From that time on he could not contemplate a world of which she was not a part, a success which was not made for her. Without conceit he knew the power that his name already carried, he knew that an ambitious player would in nine cases out of ten accept his affection, his offer of marriage, as a matter of policy—as

a means to success. But could any woman—a woman as beautiful as Kathleen D'Alroy—ever really care? He looked in the mirror and gazed long at his unlovely features, at his gross body. He decided on the bitter course. He would never speak of his regard, of his love—he would make it appear just a matter of business unless some day it should be clear that she, too, really cared.

So the interview that next morning in the parlor of the hotel was very formal. Kathleen D'Alroy thought him funny to look at. Also she thought him kindly and rather simple—she wondered idly where lay the power and magnetism that had won him such success.

He found her even more beautiful off the stage than as seen from before the footlights, and his love became adoration—worship. The battle in his room the night before had not been necessary. He would as soon have thought of permitting his lips to blaspheme a prayer as to speak of a selfish, personal love to this girl. It would have been a sacrilege.

That, with his practiced, keen knowledge of type and human nature, he did not even then read her faults could not be doubted. She was undeniably sweet and girlish, she was fascinating and lovable when she chose to be, but at heart she was vain; she was affected and selfish in almost as great a degree as he was simple and generous. With a veneer of gentility and knowledge due to constant traveling and a familiarity with the greatest roles of the old classic plays, she possessed no depth of intellect. In her favor it may be said that she was plucky and persistent; she was ambitious to succeed—not through any exalted motives of securing place and fame, but for the excitement, the money, the applause. A great *Juliet*, or a successful dancer in burlesque were one and the same to her if the public and the public's acclaim could be thereby secured in equal measure.

As often happens when the strong man is attracted by the beautiful but

weak woman, these very faults increased his love. A woman less selfish would not have had the appetite for the abundance which he wanted to place at her feet. A woman less eager for applause would not have so keenly enjoyed the triumphs he meant she should achieve. And a woman of more brilliant mind would not have needed the detailed planning, the exhaustive service and skill of manager and director and playwright which it was going to be his greatest joy in life to provide. She had that one thing he could not provide—beauty; and with it something of magnetism and natural ability as a player. Given this and a manager such as George Wagner, there was no success that could not be attained.

Her company was to close in two weeks, and without protest he engaged her at a salary which was three times that which she had ever received. Because of her experience with road managers, she had asked much more than she had any idea of obtaining, leaving a wide margin for the accustomed bargaining. His prompt acceptance confirmed her idea that he was simple and "easy" and that his business cleverness had been exaggerated. For George Wagner it solved a problem as to how he should at the start give her the money he desired her to have. Remembering the small audience of the night before, and rightly guessing that salaries had not been paid over promptly in the "East Lynne" venture, he gave her two weeks' money in advance to bind the new arrangement. She left the interview dreaming of a future of luxury and popularity and glamour in New York. He went to his matinee an inspired commander—his brain afire with plans for her beginning and her future; in his soul a psalm of happiness such as he had never known before.

The girl had left her gloves lying on the table of the hotel parlor. George Wagner saw them when she had gone and picked them up. They were white kid. He did not return them. One of them later was placed at the back of the

fireproof drawer of the office desk with the photographs. The other he always carried with him in an inside coat pocket.

The manager was about to bring to America his first foreign star—an English actor of wide reputation. The heroine of the play selected was a so-called *ingénue* type—a young girl in her teens—and George Wagner decided to put Kathleen D'Alroy in the rôle.

Three weeks later in New York, on the bare morning stage of his first Broadway theater, the rehearsals of this play commenced. Excepting the girl they were all notable players who had already achieved success in the best London and New York companies. Kathleen D'Alroy was very nervous, as well she might be. She had not seen George Wagner since the morning in the Pittsburgh hotel; as instructed, she had written him of her arrival in New York, and although hungry to see her again he had simply dictated a letter naming the hour and the place of the first rehearsal and telling her to draw on his office manager if she needed any money meantime. He wanted no suspicion of his love to cross her mind or to start going the gossip of evil tongues. So on this morning he greeted her as he greeted the others, introduced her to the members of the company and his director with the simple announcement that he had seen her work in the West and thought New York ought to have her.

The reading of the parts showed her to very ill advantage. Her methods were those for the barnstorming audience and seemed crude and grotesque in such a group of artists. She realized that somehow she was bungling, she was fearful of losing her chance, she was on the verge of tears and breakdown. On some pretext George Wagner dismissed the rehearsal after the reading of the second act. They were to look over their parts and come again the next morning.

When the players were gone, his stage director, the tall, nervous, erratic and brilliant Wallace Hope, came out

to the back of the theater where George Wagner had been standing.

"We all make mistakes," he said, "Miss D'Alroy is hopeless—she fooled me, too, when I first looked at her—such eyes—such a face—"

"Yes, we make mistakes," said George Wagner, "I should never have done her the injustice of asking her to read that part without a rehearsal."

"You mean to say that you intend to keep her!"

"Certainly—I tell you she is the greatest 'find' we have ever made."

"But she doesn't know how to act—to use her hands or her feet—she pronounces some of her words with a dreadful Western twang—she—" the Director threw up his hands in despair.

George Wagner smiled, a far-away look in his eyes. He saw the day when this woman who "could not act" would be the idol of his public—if he lived and prospered.

"She was nervous to-day. She has never had a first-class director. She has never had the training those other players possess. But for sheer magnetism and charm, even reading as badly as she did to-day, you would not have known they were on the stage."

"But I can do nothing with her."

"You are going to make her the greatest player in America!"

"But her melodramatic manner—"

"You will tame it and at the same time retain the fire and the color."

"But her diction—her pronunciation of some words would get a laugh in the most tense situation!"

"We will mark the words she speaks badly and rehearse her in them over and over."

"But why waste all this time—I saw Elsie Dane on the street yesterday—she would be great in this rôle—"

"Miss D'Alroy is the one woman in America for the part—Listen to me, Hope— You know I have usually been right in my judgment and I tell you I am putting into your hands a wonderful diamond. It's uncut, it is not polished, it needs just you to bring out its real worth—I want you to call Miss

D'Alroy for a rehearsal alone this afternoon. We will work with her—just we three. I will double your salary on the night she takes New York by storm—for she will be the greatest gold mine we will ever have."

So he spoke in the language of commerce and together they went at the artistic development of Kathleen D'Alroy. With George Wagner it was a work of love. With Wallace Hope it quickly became the discovery of a novel adventure—the adventure of creating from the very beginning a perfect work of art—of having a pupil so facile in his hands and so beautiful that there was no light or shade or depth or height he could not achieve. For the girl had industry and pluck and she realized that it was her big opportunity. So, as George Wagner later sat with his playwrights and inspired them to great achievement, so now he sat by his director and caused those expert fingers to mould the living masterpiece. Word by word, step by step (literally that, for they even marked with chalk on the stage the movement of the feet) every turn of the head, every gesture of the body these two men worked out for her. And having established the basic technique, they rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed again till it was that art which can conceal the artifice—till what had taken hours seemed the inspiration of the moment. Kathleen D'Alroy had to unlearn almost everything she had acquired, but she was a perfect mimic and with the vision of Broadway at her feet, she worked as she had never worked before. It is characteristic that while George Wagner saw her some day as *Juliet*, as the star of some masterpiece yet to be written, taking her twelfth curtain to a magnificent audience, she saw herself the center of admiration as she entered a restaurant, the magnet for all eyes as she passed along Fifth Avenue.

The opening night of the play was a triumph. The English star who had complained before because an unknown leading woman was cast opposite him, now entered heated complaint from a

far different cause. His unknown leading woman completely outshone his own talents and personality. The play ran for an entire season and Kathleen D'Alroy became the idol of the metropolis.

IV

THIS, then, was the beginning. The next year she became a star in a London success that George Wagner spent every penny and more of his former year's profit to acquire and produce. It also triumphed and his fame and hers progressed together. So now for ten years she had been his leading star, she had always the great successes—the work of Europe and America's most talented writers. And the production of each play was like the first—the author, the director, George Wagner himself working out every minute detail of her diction and her "stage business." And by another staff of experts under the same minute supervision of the great manager she was photographed and "written up" and heralded as no player had ever been before.

George Wagner continued to love her—to worship her. The woman never guessed. She came to like him, but she still thought him "funny," thought him "easy." He had never refused a request for larger salary or for the most expensive gowns in her productions. She still thought his business reputation overrated—she once told a friend that his skill lay entirely in his ability to "pick" clever people to do the real labor, herself being an obvious example. Though at first she keenly realized the debt she owed him for her own success, it became dimmed with the applause and the large salaries and the flattery and a following. To be sure she still carried out minutely the instructions of director and author, but she had a feeling that if she desired she could really do it all just as well herself. But why trouble your head when other people were paid to work it all out for you?

She could not help but at times notice George Wagner's special interest, but apart from a solicitude and kindness toward all those who were associ-

ated with him she put it down as his anxiety regarding a piece of valuable, money-earning property. Judging from her own huge salary she thought that she made for him immense profits. She did not know—nor did anyone know except his confidential business treasurer—that he often spent considerably more on her plays, the expensive *personnel* of her company, her costumes and scenery, her publicity, than he could possibly receive back even from the crowded houses that always greeted her. The civilized world was scoured for her artistic vehicles—and parts uncivilized even furnished tribute for her costumes. He would pay thousands for the mere design of a gown, an historic embroidery or a bit of lace which he thought might please her. The truth is Kathleen D'Alroy and her productions were not his business—they were his happiness, the sonnets of his dumb soul to her shrine.

As in the large, so in the little things. It was his special delight to bring her and his brilliant writers together. He would steal an hour from his busy day and take one of them up for tea to her Riverside apartment. Then he would sit back in the shadow as they talked. While having no depth she could tête-à-tête most charmingly, could banter small talk with his men of letters. It thrilled him to watch her thus. He rarely saw her alone—he felt that he had no right to occupy her time with just his own presence. One day he was called back downtown suddenly by telephone, leaving with her a writer who realized the versatile greatness of the manager. "George Wagner is a wonderful man—one of the really great men of our time," he said.

"He is a clever business man," said Kathleen D'Alroy, "but he knows nothing of art—he is very funny to me when he tries to express himself about such things." Thus did even she who had worked with him for ten years fail to realize the true wonder of the man who had been the artistic brain and soul of half her successes—who did more that was admirable in the American

theater than all the rest of his competitors combined.

There were occasional outward signs of his love for her, apart from the ever-present photograph on his desk. One incident is of special interest. She was taken ill one night in Boston—fainted just before the curtain rose on a performance. He was getting ready for a midnight steamer-sailing to Europe when the news came by long-distance telephone. It was feared some minor operation would be necessary and he ordered no expense spared to bring her comfort. There was no train till midnight, but in half an hour he was speeding toward Boston on a special over a cleared track and taking with him the greatest specialist in New York. She was moved from the Touraine Hotel to a noted hospital in Brookline, and for the next weeks had the attention of an empress. He even somehow managed to have a street cleared of heavy traffic that ran outside her window. He did not leave Boston till she was on the road to recovery, he paid no attention to business matters. He scarcely ate or slept but walked the streets between his telephonic bulletins from the hospital. When the first week of her suffering was over and he was permitted to see her he looked five years older and there was gray in his hair for the first time. It seemed as though he could contain his imprisoned love no longer, but the half-formed words of endearment froze on his lips as he gazed at her loveliness propped up against the white pillows. Instead his jerky, commonplace inquiries sounded abrupt and hard. She thought him provoked because her illness had disarranged his plans, had caused him a business loss. The man was torn with emotion, was fighting back hot tears of gratitude that she was recovering.

Of affairs of the heart, it might be said that up till now—from her point of view—there had been none. A legion of admirers had made love to her, every leading man in her companies had thought himself fervently enamoured, but she had laughed at them all and

treated them all alike. The fact was that the woman was too much in love with herself to ever care very deeply for any man. George Wagner had long since ceased to be disturbed over that contingency.

And then, one morning in April, when she was playing in San Francisco the last week of her regular season, and back in New York he was planning her first post-season Shakespearian revival, the blow fell from a clear sky. When in New York, the Manager's day was regulated to the minute. He arose at eight-thirty, for his work often continued till twelve or one o'clock at night. He had breakfast in his room at the Astor Hotel. Then he walked to his office in the theater four blocks down Broadway. He never read the newspapers till he had looked over his morning's mail and telegrams. He gave them a clear mind. While at breakfast and during the brief walk he thought out any problems yet undecided for the day's activity. As he entered the office there had seemed a strange look in the eyes of the negro, Henry. He thought the man looked ill, and made a mental note that he would send him on a vacation. The black man alone had fully guessed his master's secret. He had kept the office manager from telephoning the news to the hotel.

"Master George was very fond of her and he will be surprised—I shouldn't wonder if she's sent one of these telegrams, and he'd rather learn it first that way."

The darkey stayed on in the little room as George Wagner opened his telegrams and read them one by one. His stars, his company managers wired him every night after the play—the one regarding the artistic reception of the performance, the other an exact report of the receipts and any local conditions affecting them. The negro saw him suddenly bend forward, saw his shoulders stiffen. The servant took a step nearer but stopped short at what met his eyes. George Wagner sat staring at an open telegram—his face drained of every vestige of color, his body seem-

ingly paralyzed at what he read. And then a low moan escaped his whitened lips, he threw up his arms, gazed for a moment at the face of his mother and then bowed his head to the desk in anguish, sobbing as only a strong man can sob when his soul is torn asunder.

The negro heard someone coming toward the door leading to the outer office and in an instant he had noiselessly turned the key in the lock. His own eyes were wet, his own suffering as he watched George Wagner left him weak as a child, but he could have strangled with the strength of a dozen men any intruder that tried to pass and look upon his master's Gethsemane.

All the papers that morning had printed despatches on their first page—Kathleen D'Alroy, the well-known actress, and "Freddy" Lorrillard, clubman, polo player, sole heir of his late father's millions, were married by a justice of the peace, in San Francisco, after a mid-night supper. The telegram to George Wagner had read:

Have just married Freddy Lorrillard, of New York. Cancel Shakespearean season. Congratulate me for I think I shall be happy. We are drinking a toast to you.

Youth is the cruellest thing in the world. It was signed, 'Kathleen Lorrillard.'

How George Wagner spent the rest of that day only one person knew—a huge black servant who followed him when he at last raised his head and, automatically taking his hat, walked from the building in a daze. He seemed to have no plan of action—he just turned to the right as he came out of the theater side-door on Thirty-ninth Street and walked till the East River barred the way. Then he suddenly looked about, saw that he could go no farther in that direction, and plunged south. Somewhere about Canal Street a truck was unloading across the sidewalk and he mechanically turned west going clear across town till he came to the Hudson River docks. Then quite as aimlessly he started back north. At eight o'clock that night on some cross

street in the Bronx he stopped, put his hand to his eyes and staggered and fell to the sidewalk. He had walked miles without pause, without a morsel to eat or drink. The black servant and a policeman reached him at the same moment and carried him into a saloon where a little whiskey and water quickly revived him. He noticed the servant for the first time and seemed to take his presence for granted. "Get me a taxicab, Henry," he said, "I'll be all right soon." He thanked the policeman and ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk. When the taxicab came he walked out to it unassisted and motioned Henry to get in after him. In absolute silence they reached the Astor. He refused the black man's assistance as he got out—seemed in all outward appearance to be himself again. He gave just one instruction to his servant.

"Discontinue the order for the roses," he said, "and remove the vase—give it to anyone you choose."

V

TEN days later, one morning about eleven o'clock, Henry brought a card to the private office. There was an anxiety in his eyes, a hesitancy as he laid it on the desk by George Wagner. The Manager was sitting in a reverie staring at the Kathleen D'Alroy picture and yet seeming to see beyond it—an open play-manuscript which he had been marking, forgotten before him. It was a thing he had done often since the day of the telegram from San Francisco. He looked at the card mechanically—saw that it was a stranger.

"You know that I never meet these people, Henry," he said with a trace of irritation, "refer the gentleman to Mr. Willard in the outer office."

The black man cleared his throat nervously. "The gentleman says the business is personal, Master George—perhaps you don't recognize the name—it's the man Miss D'Alroy—was married to—"

George Wagner looked again at the card. He picked it up and turned it over in his hands several times. That

he was suffering—that it was an opening of the wound the servant could see. He cursed himself for bringing it in at all, but the man had been insistent.

"Show Mr. Lorrilard in," said George Wagner finally.

"Freddy" Lorrilard was a big, handsome young animal, known as a good fellow, a free spender, a connoisseur of women and horses; a figure in the more flashy life of Newport and Palm Beach. He had been dropped from Harvard two years before because of some gay party in his college rooms. As he entered the little office George Wagner rose. The young man was smoking a cigarette in an amber holder and he did not remove his brown derby hat, which matched perfectly the brown suit and tie and oxfords. With an easy, patronizing familiarity he strode forward and spoke, without offering to shake hands with the Manager.

"I'm Mr. Lorrilard—Kathleen's husband, you know."

"I received Miss D'Alroy's telegram," George Wagner said evenly. He had winced visibly at the name "Kathleen" in Lorrilard's mouth. In the ten years of their relationship he had never dreamed of speaking of her as "Kathleen." "Won't you have a chair?" he continued and motioned to the one opposite him.

Freddy Lorrilard dropped into the leather, crossed his long legs and placed his gold-headed stick against the green top desk. "Oh, I came in on purely a matter of business," he said. There was again the condescension that he should accept the seat, the unconscious grading of George Wagner back into his proper lower level. It was as if he was speaking to his paid racing trainer and had chosen to visit him at his quarters in the stable instead of sending for the man.

"I am listening," said George Wagner, coldly but still politely.

Freddy Lorrilard selected a fresh cigarette from his case, started to put the jeweled container back into his pocket and then held it out to the Manager. "Have one," he said. It wasn't

an inquiry, it was a gracious favor. His voice meant "You may have one, too."

"No, thank you," replied George Wagner. "You spoke of some matter of business?"

"Well, it's this way," said the young millionaire as he lit his cigarette. "You see, I don't want my wife to continue on the stage—not quite the thing, you know, with my family connections and all that—and I wanted to find out what contract she has with you and how much longer it runs so that I can buy it off—I understand that something like that can be done—"

George Wagner's eyes narrowed, but he spoke still evenly. "Does—your wife know that you were coming to see me about this?" he asked.

"Lord, no! I don't want to bother her about such beastly business matters." He produced a check-book and a fountain pen, which he shook toward the floor to start the ink flow, then lurched his chair toward the extending panel shelf of the desk. "Name your own figure," he said. "There's no limit I won't go for that little girl."

George Wagner was gripping tightly the arms of his chair. It was a full moment before he spoke.

"There is no contract," he said. "There is nothing to pay."

The expectant face of Freddy Lorillard fell as he reluctantly closed his check book. It would have been a good story to tell Kathleen that he had paid a large sum to free her from any annoying claims and possible lawsuits of her erstwhile manager. And a jolly tale for the Club, too! He was disappointed. Then, as he looked up at George Wagner, it occurred to him that this theater manager was doing quite a square thing—he might have lied and said there was a contract and held him up for quite a sum. Very unusually decent it was of him.

"Look here," he said, leaning forward familiarly and pushing the brown hat to the back of his head, "I'm no tightwad, and it's rather decent of you to be honest about the contract. I want

to do the square thing, and I've no doubt my grabbing Kathleen has done you out of a lot of future profits—I'd like to make up for it in some way. I'll tell you what—if you're ever putting on a musical show and want a backer—an 'angel' I think you call it—just get in touch with me—you know the kind of a show I mean—something with lots of girls and tights—"

George Wagner rose. He was not thinking of the young fool before him, he was thinking of the woman—the woman who had been to him a religion, the incarnation of his God. There was a horrible clutching at his heart, a horrible aching at his throat. Then as through a red haze he saw Freddy Lorillard.

The young man got up hastily. He felt that he had made a mistake—a blunder—though he didn't see just where. "Of course," he hastened to explain, "I don't mean anything wrong—now that I've tied up with Kathleen I've cut out the gay life—but for my friends—it would be good fun to know—"

George Wagner had not moved. His short, ungraceful figure was not majestic—his round face only in its extreme paleness and the constricted set of the jaw suggested any great emotion, but somehow there filtered through even to the brain of Freddy Lorillard the white burning soul of the man, the agony of his fettered spirit, the tremendous anger that was surging underneath and might presently burst the iron control. For the first time, too, he noticed the prints of Grant and of Lincoln on the wall behind George Wagner, and as he looked back at the face of the living man he took off his hat, he muttered some apology and turned and left the office quickly, fearfully, as if pursued.

VI

"Yes, he might have been a really great manager," handsome William Gilbert, Jr., Broadway's newest star and matinee idol, was orating to a group of newspaper men and actors two

months later against the Knickerbocker bar, where Sammy Grant, of *The Sun*, had just finished telling for the hundredth time of his own personal escape from the ill-fated ocean liner on which George Wagner had gone so bravely to his death. "He might have been another Augustin Daly," continued the actor. "But he had no poetry, no soul, no appreciation of the finer things of life—this wonderful creative profession of ours was to him just a department store, a shoe factory, something to make money with. Why, I ask you, how could a man appreciate the romance, the finer things of life, who had never been in love, who never paid the slightest attention to any woman—"

"Come to think of it," broke in Sammy Grant excitedly, "you may be wrong in that, Gilbert. As I told you, he stood there on the deck in the moonlight as the last life-boat pushed off with a sort of strange, calm happiness on his face—I tell you the man was

beautiful in that awful moment—he seemed joyful to meet the end. I never could understand what it was, but you've given me a clue. Perhaps there was a woman—a woman who died—for he held something white in his hand that I would swear now was a woman's glove—"

"More likely a contract," said Gilbert. "There's the case of Kathleen D'Alroy. The man managed her for ten years and she never even moved him. I don't mind confessing that I was head over heels insane about her the season I played the lead to her *Babette*. A man who could be associated with such beauty and not fall was an iceberg. Take my word for it, George Wagner was only a good business man. He missed out completely in the Greatness thing because Heaven forgot to give him a soul. . . . Come on, fellows—drink up! I'll have another Vat Thirty-three Scotch highball. What's yours?"



DER ÜBERMENSCH

Βαῖ Δημήτριος Ἀγορανοῦσιακόπουλος

Θέρος οῖας ἀ ίώνυ Νιετζε δφ Λάιμ
Χον μάρριεδ θρήν ονάίνες ἀτ ἀ τάιμ
Χονέν δσκεδ, χονάι ἀ θίρθ;
Ἡ οηράδεδ, ούνς ἀβούρδ,
Ἄνδ διγαμι, Σίρ, ίς ἀ κράμ.



WHEN a man sees a pretty married woman, he always wonders if she is happy with her husband.



WHEN a man falls in love, it means that a woman was looking for amusement.

THE GIRL WHO COULDN'T QUIT HER JOB

By Frank R. Adams

LOVE is an affliction that gets us all sooner or later, but it seems to be especially virulent among stenographers."

Conversation in the smoking compartment of a parlor car will touch upon almost any subject in the world, so there was no reason why it should not veer, in the course of time, to typists.

The man who said he was in business for himself manufacturing and selling patent magnetic collar-button locators had introduced the topic aenent the general subject of the prenatal cussedness of salaried employees.

"My life has been one long hell of breaking in new and green stenographers. I've had 'em fresh from the business college and I've tried hiring clock-stoppers carrying weight for age. It doesn't seem to make any difference. Just about the time one learns my filing system and knows how to spell the names of my principal customers without asking me about it some floorwalker with a prominent Adam's apple crowds a ring on her and makes her trade a swell job with a salary attached to it for a life sentence over the wash-tubs and the kitchen sink, with no pay except what can be found loose in the trousers' pocket when husband is asleep. The only way that I can see to make a success of my office is to incorporate it as a marriage bureau."

"I had the same trouble once," remarked the carelessly dressed, rather sad-looking man who had not entered into the conversation to any extent so far.

The manufacturer turned toward him with courteous attention. "You say you 'had' the same sort of trouble. Do I understand from your use of the past tense that you are now able to keep a stenographer for any length of time?"

"I've kept the same one for five years," the other man said impressively, reaching for a match in the box so conveniently placed by the Pullman Company on the walls of the smoking compartments in their cars. The fact that there were no matches in it did not seem to surprise him in the least, which proved that he was a seasoned traveler, accustomed to riding in Pullmans.

Someone else in the crowd handed him one of those vest pocket folders containing pasteboard matches which may be torn off and struck along a strip of chemically treated sandpaper at the base. He did tear off and strike several. They crumpled up, as per schedule, in his hand, allowing his finger-nails to grate irritatingly, as per schedule, on the sandpaper. Finally he returned the empty folder to the man who had offered it.

"Here, take my cigar lighter," offered the Magnetic Collar-Button Finder Company man.

The would-be smoker eyed it with distrust. "No, thank you."

"This one is infallible," insisted the M. C.-B. F. Co. man.

"After that claim I shall take no chance of embarrassing you before these strangers. But if you will give me a light from your cigar. Thank you."

The owner of the cigar lighter worked it three or four times before he put it away to prove that what he said was true.

"They always work," commented the other pessimistically, "except in the presence of unlighted tobacco."

"You were going to tell us how you kept one stenographer for five years," courteously suggested the first speaker when everybody was contributing his share toward the highly flavored atmosphere of the stuffy compartment.

"Oh, yes. Perhaps it may make it easier for you to understand how I did it if I tell you my name. I sign myself Wilmer Saint-Godfrey."

His vis-à-vis slapped his thigh, his own thigh that is, and leaned forward enthusiastically, "Why I know you. You're the chap who writes 'The Hazards of Hilda,' now running serially all over the United States in the Stein Syndicate Newspapers and appearing as moving-pictures in the principal nickel theaters in this country and Canada."

"Correct," agreed the author, modestly. "Lest, however, you suspect me unjustly of being a character out of 'Little Lord Fauntleroy,' I may state that my real name is not Wilmer Saint-Godfrey. My real name doesn't matter particularly as my experience has nothing to do with it.

"A great many years ago I started to write with more or less success for the public prints. My handiwork has appeared in every conceivable sort of journal. Once I wrote dairy articles for the *Gentleman's Home Cow Breeder and Gazette*, and I have contributed helpful hints on every subject from babies to needlework to all the principal women's magazines in this country. That writing was largely hack work, but it paid fairly well if I could do enough of it.

"I did not have much trouble getting the material. Even then my imagination was pretty good and I could spin out a thousand words without leaving my swivel chair on how to pot gerani-

ums at a hundred yards' range or the best method of keeping a cow from sitting down while being milked.

"But typewriting the stuff got me. It caused a diabolical pain in the back of my neck that spread both ways until it involved my spinal column and what must have been my medulla oblongata if I had one left after my operation. Two hours' work at the key-board and I would be a physical wreck with a longing to become a Trappist, preferably in a convent, far from the madding necessity of labor.

"Then came my emancipation. One time when I was crowded with work that had to be finished by a certain time and was desperate with fatigue, a friend of mine who had an office force offered to lend me his own personal stenographer for half a day until I could catch up with my schedule. I accepted his offer doubtfully, not believing that it would be possible for me to use her, but desperate enough to try anything.

"That girl was a wonder. She converted me then and there to a belief in the marvels of modern science. I had an outline of what I was going to write and I talked it off to her. Sometimes before that I'd get stuck for a word or phrase that would keep me hunting for half an hour, but with that girl sitting before me, pencil and note-book in hand, I felt as if I were keeping her from a ball-game or something, so I gave my brain a kick and it got busy and shelled out a mass of language equal to anything Noah Webster ever wrote. That afternoon we made thirty dollars and when I got through I was all over being tired.

"I decided then and there to have a stenographer of my own. I figured it out that the extra amount of copy I could turn out would easily pay the additional expense. There seemed little difficulty in taking the initial step. An advertisement in the paper brought a throng of unemployed stenographers to the place I fondly called my office although the only office equipment I possessed at that time was a kitchen table

and a two-cylinder, double-opposed typewriter mounted on it.

"I did not know exactly what qualifications a stenographer should possess, so I chose at random a pink and white one that looked as if she would not be very tiring to the eyes. I had them and still retain a certain aesthetic love of the beautiful and the idea of enforced companionship for long daily periods with an unattractive person jarred upon me. The one I selected was quite the contrary. She was so good looking that at times it interfered with business. How could I dictate prosaically about cow itch to a demure creature with lovely hair and long-lashed blue eyes?

"I need not have let such things worry me. Just as I was thinking seriously of abandoning farm literature with its frank discussion of spades by their given names and devoting myself exclusively to the embroidery department of the *Ladies' Own Companion* type of magazine, my stenographer informed me that she was going to be married the following week.

"I was so upset that I couldn't work any more until after the ceremony. I had noticed an immature sprat who had been calling to take her home after working hours every day but I had supposed it was her brother. Had I suspected his real identity I might easily have placed a poisoned pin in the chair in which he was accustomed to sit while waiting for Ethel, that was her name, to get through. If I had, Ethel would doubtless thank me now, because she has been punished by having twins, each of which resembles the father.

"However, I finally recovered from my disappointment and got a new assistant. In order to safeguard myself I sacrificed my love of beauty and picked out one that I thought that no one else would want. Her name was Maizie, but she wasn't that kind of a girl at all. A Maizie should be little and fluffy and she ought to be able to dance like thistledown on an evening breeze. Mine was tall and bony and if she ever danced, which I doubt, it

would have to be on a reinforced concrete floor. With Maizie I felt sure that I was fixed for life and every time I looked at her I rather regretted it. There was no trouble about dictating cow literature to her. Somehow it seemed appropriate.

"But she was a fiend for work and after a while I ceased being displeased by her Gothic exterior and we got along in fine shape. She had been with me a month when the crash came. She brought it in and let me look at it the way a cat does with a mouse. I suppose she was proud of him, but I couldn't see where he was fascinating enough to lure her away from me, especially as I was willing to pay for her society. My face isn't much to look at, but Maizie's intended was hiding his behind a full set of whiskers.

"There was no use in reasoning with a woman, so I came across with a wedding present. I had my revenge a year later when Mr. Maizie was hurt in an accident and they had to shave him to find out where he was cut. After one look Maizie bought him a bottle of hair grower and went to visit her parents for a month.

"Still I kept on trying my luck. One after another my typists succumbed to someone else's charms until Gwendolyn came. It seemed to make no difference whether my assistants were pretty or not, so I hired Gwen in spite of the peaches and cream in her cheeks and the starry look in her eyes. She affected black satin one-piece suits for a working costume that set off her complexion very well, especially at the neck, which was cut V fashion, and at the elbows, above which the sleeves left off.

"I sighed to think what a short time she would last. You can imagine my surprise therefore when at the end of a couple of months she was still with me. Finally I spoke to her about it. 'Gwen,' I said, 'how does it happen that you are not married or engaged to be married?'

"She lifted her eyes to mine. 'My heart is broken,' she said simply with a heavenly smile spreading over her face.

tures. 'My husband has been dead only six months.'

"So that was it. Why had I never thought of hiring a widow before?

"I don't think I ought to marry again for another six months, do you?" Gwendolyn regarded me steadfastly with those soulful eyes of hers as she asked the question.

"Decidedly not," I told her.

"At any rate I could count on half a year more of Gwendolyn and even that much certainty was a relief. And Gwendolyn was some stenographer. The Remington had no secrets from her. It would lie down and roll over at the word of command and when she touched the keyboard it would purr like a cat. Another advantage about having Gwendolyn around the office came in connection with the fiction which I had now begun to write. Whenever I wanted to describe a particularly beautiful girl all I had to do was to look at Gwen and tell what I saw. Sometimes I could write a dozen pages of description and even at three cents a word that counts up. Gwen paid her own salary every week without knowing it.

"I got so used to having her around that I was lulled into a false security. The months rolled by and I depended more and more on her. My work grew better; I got paid more for it and being relieved of the necessity of breaking in new help I had time to do more of it.

"Therefore it was a terrific jolt when Gwendolyn announced that her second wedding was impending.

"I was thunderstruck — speechless. It was a disaster I could not face. 'When?' I asked. It was all I could think of to say.

"The day hasn't been set," she answered. 'I told George that I wouldn't leave you without plenty of notice. We're just going to have a quiet wedding before a justice of the peace. George has the license now and I'm to let him know any time I'm ready.'

"I told Gwen unhappily that if she wanted to go I couldn't keep her, but that I should like to have her stay until

the end of the week. She agreed and went off to tell her fiancé about it.

"I went home disconsolate. All my structure of contentment was tumbling about my ears. The thought of selecting a successor to the competent Gwendolyn from the string of girls who would apply for the position sickened me. It seemed as if I couldn't go through it again. Rather would I go back to the old method and do my own typewriting regardless of pain and fatigue.

"I was so unhappy that it was impossible to work even for the short time that Gwendolyn was scheduled to stay. Instead I sat and scowled at the wallpaper until she would laugh at me. Then we would talk about her future plans and whether we should ever meet again and all that sort of thing. Gwendolyn was so happy about it that it made me mad. I almost wished that I could do something to spoil it for her.

"The day came that she was to leave. My heart was leaden and I dictated a perfunctory letter or two to her, but I found it impossible to start any real work. The lunch hour came and afternoon. In four hours she would be leaving. She hummed a little melody as she went about the insignificant tasks of tidying up the office, putting away a few scattered papers, arranging my books as I wanted them.

"With a lump in my throat I realized that she was doing it for the last time, that never again would her fingers arrange my manuscripts. It could not be, I would not stand for it. My mind cast about wildly for some means of preventing the catastrophe.

"It was four o'clock. I had promised to let her go at five. Even now she was idle, sitting expectantly as if she thought I might dismiss her earlier if there were nothing more to do.

"I couldn't stand by and let her take her efficient self out of that door and utter no word of protest. I cudgelled my brain. It was four-thirty. Time was slipping along at breakneck speed.

"I got up and began to pace the floor of my narrow office. I always do when

I am thinking hard on a plot or dictating. When Gwendolyn sees me start walking she knows that she will be required and she always gets out her notebook and pencils unobtrusively so as to be ready when I begin. She did it now. I smiled sadly to myself as I thought how little chance there was of my dictating anything of importance to her in the twenty minutes that was left of her tenure of the position.

"Then the great idea came. It was sheer inspiration prompted, of course, by Gwendolyn's familiar act of getting ready to take dictation. It might not work but it was worth trying. I took one or two more turns up and down the floor to marshal my thoughts and began:

"The title is 'The Mystery of the Sixth Man from Peru.'"

"Gwendolyn took it down methodically and then looked up when I paused. 'That's a good title,' she commented sagely.

"'Chapter One,' I dictated. "'Curse you, Carl Cassanova,' said the man with the purple Tyrolean hat, 'either you or I is going to leave this place in charge of the embalmer.' Period. Paragraph. The two men clinched and rolled to the floor. Paragraph. A revolver shot rang out. Exclamation point. Paragraph. In the silence that followed there was no sound but the guttering of a candle and the slow drip of water from a near-by stalactite. Period. Look up that word in the dictionary, Gwen, and see if a stalactite hangs from the roof or sticks up from the floor of a cave. I never can remember. Where was I? Oh, yes. New paragraph. Then came the pad-pad of furry feet on the smooth floor of the cavern. The lion was returning."

"The office clock registered five minutes after five but Gwendolyn had not noticed it.

"A rap at the door interrupted me just as I was about to go on. Gwendolyn looked at me inquiringly and I nodded to her to answer it.

"Without stood a strange young man. 'George,' said my heart and

Gwendolyn's vocal organs at the same time.

"'I'm pleased to meet you,' I lied upon being presented to the rather good-looking youth.

"'Are you all ready, Gwendolyn?' he asked.

"'Oh, I'm so sorry, George,' she cooed at him, 'but Mr. Saint-Godfrey is just in the midst of a story and if you don't mind we'll put off the wedding until it is done. It would be awfully hard for him to start a new stenographer right in the middle of a story. She wouldn't know what the first part was about or anything. Mr. Saint-Godfrey has been so kind to me that you won't care if I do this little thing for him, will you?'

"George did mind, but he was so thoroughly under the spell of Gwendolyn's beauty and coaxing voice that he agreed."

"'It will only take a few days,' promised Gwen. 'I'll be back Monday,' she flung at me as she went out with her fiancé. 'I'll get some new note-books before I come.'

"I laughed to myself when I thought how my scheme had worked. To be sure I was committed to an impossible sort of a story. No publisher would possibly want to buy a trashy mess such as 'The Mystery of the Sixth Man from Peru,' but I would string it along for a few days just to keep Gwendolyn near me.

"On Monday she reported, all eager to begin work and, laughing at myself, I began dictating chapter after chapter of thefoolest nonsense I could think up. I put my hero over waterfalls, through fires and under collapsing buildings. I noted almost with alarm that Gwendolyn hung on my words breathlessly and when the time came to quit she offered to work overtime if I wished. I declined. I had talked quite enough drivel for one day.

"Gwendolyn had gotten into the habit of attending to my mailing for me and when we had done about ten thousand words of the fool stuff she sent it off without my knowledge. For several

days I kept stringing together adventures, secure in the knowledge that as long as I kept my hero's neck in danger I was depriving George of the pleasure of Gwendolyn's society.

"Imagine my surprise, however, when I opened my mail one day and the largest check I had ever seen with my name on it fell out of a long envelope, and with it a letter from the editor of one of the foremost magazines in the country.

"My dear Mr. Saint-Godfrey," it began cordially, "I congratulate you on having struck your pace at last. What the reading public wants is action and in "The Mystery of the Sixth Man from Peru" you have supplied the want. I am glad to see that you have done away with the talkiness which has made your contributions unsuitable to our publication heretofore. I enclose a half-payment for the magazine rights of the novel, the rest to be paid upon the completion of the third installment. Merely endorsing the check constitutes an acceptance of this offer. Let me know, however, if I may arrange with the Colossal Photoplay Company for the simultaneous appearance of the film version and how much you would wish for those rights."

"I was dazed. My joke on Gwendolyn had a very pleasant return kick in it. I pondered deeply over the incident. Apparently the stuff that fooled the fluffy brains of Gwendolyn also deceived magazine editors. And I had been wasting time for years thinking up logical plots!"

"I shuddered at the fate of the moving-picture actor who was about to follow where I led, but checks like that were not to be sneezed at and I plunged in recklessly, committing crime after crime with impunity and with no more effort than opening my mouth and letting the air from my lungs pass over the vocal organs instead of being breathed out through the nose.

"Gwendolyn kept up a feverish interest in the story and I felt like another Scheherezade staving off death by my ingenuity as a story-teller. It grew to be

a sort of a game with me to leave my hero in such an inextricable position every afternoon about quitting time that there could be no question of Gwendolyn's reporting the next morning in order to help me get him out. Once when I had the poor leading-man at the bottom of a shaft with an elevator, cut loose from its cables twenty stories above, starting to drop on him and all doors locked, Gwendolyn asked me how I was going to save him.

"I refused to tell her. 'Giving away the solution in advance destroys my inspiration,' I explained, not willing to admit that I hadn't the least idea how to save the poor fish. I had a private opinion that my hero's head was made of some solid and indestructible material which would wreck the elevator without hurting him in the least, but that answer would not do for Gwen or for the public.

"The next morning Gwen was haggard from a sleepless night spent in worrying about Cedric's plight. Cedric was the name of the benighted simpleton who allowed himself to get shut up in the shaft. When I rescued him she sighed with relief. You'll doubtless remember how I got him out if you saw Chapter Twenty of 'The Sixth Man from Peru' in the moving-picture serial.

"Another person almost as interested in the career of Cedric, the mushhead, as Gwendolyn was George, her postponed bridegroom. Every day he would come in to enquire if I had killed the darn fool yet. It's lucky for Cedric that George was not the villain of the piece, because George would have been a hard man to foil and it's a cinch that sometime the heroine would have arrived a second too late to find Cedric in a condition that would never be passed by the Ohio Board of Censors.

"Then one day George failed to turn up. I did not think much of it, but when the same phenomenon occurred every day for a week I spoke to Gwen about it.

"Has anything happened to George?" I inquired solicitously.

"He's gone," she informed me.

"'Gone?' I echoed. 'Without you?'

"Yes, he got tired of waiting and eloped with the wife of a man by the name of C. C. Smalley."

"A strange feeling, half joy, half regret came over me. 'I wonder,' I mused, 'if by any chance Mr. Smalley's first name is Cedric. I suspect it somehow.'

"It is,' said Gwendolyn, amazed, as usual at my cleverness. 'How did you know it?'

"Deduction, my dear girl—analytical mind and all that sort of thing."

"That afternoon I wound up the affairs of Soulful Cedric in one, two, three order and abandoned him helpless at the altar in the clutches of a flaxen-haired doll who would doubtless take up the hectoring motive where my villain, hastily deceased, had left off. With no brains to guide him but his own I could see a swift finish for the handsome fathead, but I had spent time enough getting him out of trouble. I knew that the next time he saw a bomb with the fuse sputtering he would try to hatch something out of it, but it was none of my affair. It would teach him a lesson.

"Nothing further was said about Gwen's departure. It was not necessary. We returned to our earlier ambitions and despite the urgent letters from editors we wrote art for a while, nothing that could be filmed except by time exposures.

"But when I noticed signs of restlessness on Gwen's part about three months later I switched hastily back to the rough stuff and wrote 'The Strange Case of the Uninvited Guest.' That

was the serial where Goldie Gazzaza, the heiress of the Gazzaza millions, was almost kissed by the Chinese villain, Dr. Wong Loo, at the end of every chapter. If it had ever happened she could never have married Harold Hasbrouck, who was a twin brother of Cedric's, only this one had a moustache so he could be played by Jack Barrymore.

"Thus it was that I kept Gwendolyn's attention. In the spring it was difficult and every June I had to pass out some pretty strong stuff. One year I wrote 'The Man Who Was Not Dead,' another time it was 'Wings of Lead,' and last season I turned out the famous 'Mystery of Number Thirteen Avenue X.'

The sad-faced author paused and examined his cigar which had gone out.

"Have one of mine," offered the inventor and manufacturer of the boon to mankind. "Your scheme sounds very interesting, but I can't see how to apply it to my business. I suppose you are working on a new mystery now. What is the name of it?"

"I'm not writing any more mystery stories just at present."

"You're not? But this is June. How do you keep your stenographer from getting married?"

"I don't. She's married and I'm doing my own typewriting again."

"How did you come to let her do that?"

"I couldn't stop her, worse luck. She insisted on it."

"That's too bad. Whom did she marry?"

"Me."



IN complimenting a woman, you simply tell her something she has always secretly believed.



ANEGOTISTIC man is one who has dealt only with inexperienced women.

THE JOKER

By Hilary Goode Richardson

THREE was a man who liked his prank, and also had much curiosity. He desired greatly to know what his kin and his fellow citizens thought of him. So he made a bargain with the undertaker to come and lay him out. The undertaker came with a coffin, put the man in it, and put his face on exhibition beneath the glass, in the parlor.

Fellow citizens streamed to the house and brought flowers, all except the editor of the paper, who was writing an obituary. As he lay in the coffin the man, out of the corner of his eye, saw his sons weeping. When the parlor door was locked the man got up and walked around, and laughed greatly at his original joke.

The plan was that the undertaker should have him carried to the cemetery, after a decent funeral, and the man would kick the top off the coffin as they were about to lower him into the ground. The man lay in the coffin and heard the funeral sermon and the weeping, and then he heard the tolling bells.

On the long ride to the cemetery the man fell asleep. The undertaker was not blind to the chance. He already had the money for his hand in the joke. He would collect another bill for the funeral. So he had him lowered gently into the grave.

What the man did when he awoke is not known.



BEAUTY LIKE A BIRD

By Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff

BEAUTY like a bird
Filled my lonely heart,
O, the music stirred!
O, the lyric-start!

All the tremulous air
Sweet with flower-scent,
Singing everywhere
Glory, wonderment.

O, the light above,
O, the blossoming!—
Is it sudden love—
Or the torch of Spring . . . ?

THE WHIMSICAL ADVENTURE

By Paul Hervey Fox

I

THREE is no greater fool than a clever fool. It was in this category that the man of whom I have here something to recount properly belonged.

At an early hour he set himself to learn the lamentable trait of tactlessness, and graduated with honors. This he called asserting his individuality. Inevitably that pebble rolled down an avalanche of contrariness and he grew insufferable.

He was no stripling when he married, for he had sworn the great oath of all his broken oaths to remain a free-agent until such time as experience should leave no illusions for marriage to destroy. It was in his early thirties that he first met her. She was as intelligent as she was handsome, and as handsome as she was heartless, which is to deal with superlatives. Nevertheless, their encounter was the pleasant story of love at first glance, the only love that may correctly be called so, holding as it does all the healthy, passionate, animal elements, and holding them quite unconsciously.

Acute as she was, that gay, careless lady, she set down his endless contradictions merely as indicative of a soul twitching under love's delicate torture. Had she followed him homewards after his neat proposal, she might, perhaps, have awakened to the simple realities. For when she had accepted him with "I—I don't know what to say. I can't speak—now. Please, please don't ask me," he had trudged forth into the air, but had failed, after the approved fashion of romance, to trudge on it. Rather

was his stride heavily despondent. For the life of him he couldn't name a virtue of hers at the moment; her every characteristic was colored black by her acceptance.

Morning came, and having turned his melancholy attention upon the previous night's mood, he cursed himself for folly's puppet. On the point of flying the country, reporting himself dead, or indulging in some such piece of absurdity, a telegram arrived which revoked her consent, requested forgiveness, and even wept a little within its clipped confines of ten economical words. The thing seems unaccountable, for she really desired the man; but perhaps she was only pleading for the final compliment of repetition.

If so, it was at least not long forthcoming. Rejected, he could now perceive in her nothing save virtues as crowded and bright as stars in autumn. In the end, of course, she twined her hair about his hand, pushed him vigorously, cried for succor when no one was about, and—all metaphorically, if you please—had herself dragged to the altar, pretending deliciously in her heart that she was coerced, even whilst she kept one eye watchful to see that his grip did not weaken.

Their marriage was the usual mistake. A very short while sufficed to open the eyes of the woman to the fact that she was mated to an embodiment of contradictions. On his part the man rested content: he had no ground of any sort on which to rear a tower of dislike. It was she, the ironic woman, it may rightly be reckoned, who cultivated the objections and regretted the existence of a certain marriage record.

You are not to conceive of her from this as a dishevelled female with streaming eyes, one arm draping the mantel, the other flung up in a despairing gesture to heaven. Regret is a mild word, but it happens to paint a veracious picture of her reaction. She didn't, for one thing, detest the man; in fact, she even went so far as to admit that in many ways he was a good sort. He was hardly, it is true, the kind of phenomenon that aspirants for political power pretend to be, but he had good table-manners and a certain delicate feeling for humor: things of deeper importance. In dust-small matters of this sort, which marriage invests with such keen significance, he had not failed. It was only his eternal denial of the mildest of statements that drove her into a smiling rage.

Presently they clucked and chattered with ungraceful quarreling. Regularity soon sucked out any essence of excitement for her; and while he conducted the orchestration of the piece and played the prompter as well, she sat by with eyes that were cold with boredom.

Two years were required to make her position intolerable. Then, weary at last of perpetual bickering, the wife quietly prepared to retreat. Once the hint of separation came, he was all protestation and begging apologies.

A faint light of hope crept into her eyes. "Then you'll try to end these everlasting arguments over trifles?" she asked.

"But the question, dear," he commenced forthright, "the question is, are they trifles? Now to you, no doubt . . ."

She threw up her hands. "Incurable!" she murmured, and regarded him for a silent moment.

At that he frankly went to pieces. "See here, dear, you're unjust. I—that is—anyway, I'm not incurable. You know—"

"Exactly; I know. Why—can't you see?—you're contradicting me even in this!"

"No, I don't see that. Because, if . . ."

She fled with a burst of frigid laughter.

II

THE doll, thoroughly tired, not of being a physical plaything, but of being a mental sparring-partner, having left the house, she did not, one may rest complacent, take to selling matches on the streets and singing pathetic ballads about her drunken husband after the fashion of the Victorian era. . . . Like many otherwise rational people, she had an uncle in a New Jersey suburb.

To him she now turned, ignoring the kneeling entreaties of her husband. Her uncle, a ripe-faced, irascible old gentleman with the blue eyes of a baby and the side-whiskers of a relic, made her a great show of welcome.

The truth was that once upon a time he had met the contradictory husband and in the course of a chat concerning trap-shooting—on which the old gentleman was something of an authority—discovered himself at the end in a violent, finger-shaking argument.

"Sir," he had abruptly concluded that discussion, "if I had known that I was talking with a dolt, by gad, I would have—ahhhh!" The final ejaculation, weighted with disgust, put his meaning nicely. He drew himself rigid so that his watch-chain was not so hotly pressed by the semicircle of his stomach, and stalked away, scowling, grumbling, swearing.

The incident had remained in the old gentleman's memory. He referred thenceforth to his niece's husband as "That dolt . . . bah!" and was pleased to prophesy a howling unhappiness for the "poor, deluded girl." When, therefore, she appeared on his threshold, he was secretly delighted. The thing was indeed well-staged. A wild storm of snow was scudding down through the blackness as she arrived, and the wind was up and wailing. It is not impossible to imagine bolts clacking back, the oaken door swinging open, the ancient servitor peering forth into the night with one hand shading his eyes, the other dangling a lantern. There was

really nothing lacking. Even the muff she carried slantwise in her arms looked uncommonly like a baby.

In that quiet suburb in the months that followed she was scarcely elated with what life had to offer. Her heavy uncle insisted on sighing prodigiously over her predicament, and trumpeting grief on his nose at appropriate intervals. He set down her easy, aloof attitude as the stoic's hard courage and took certain private steps forthwith about which you are to learn later.

As for her attitude, she is hardly to be censured. There was little diversion of a healthy, human order for the ironic woman in that tight domestic circle. Her aunt, one of those people whom we always detest in retrospect and rather like in actual encounter, had been dead for many years. Unfortunately she had committed the blunder of never being buried, and still puttered about, staring absently out of windows, pondering on the possibility of a change of weather, and behaving like a thoroughly exemplary ghost-in-the-flesh. As for her only cousin, there was little affinity to be found there. Too ingenuous for an *ingénue*, that elderly child—which properly describes her—was a stable fixture of the gilded provincialism of suburbia and a participant in all its social horrors. She was even a pillar of the local church, an ancient metaphor which for once assumes sharp airs—for she was exactly as instrumental in its support as a pillar, and exactly as spiritually sympathetic.

It may, therefore, be presumed that the guest was hardly enlivened by the personalities that environed her. She endeavored at first to take part in the life of the place, but found it a fatuous aim. Because she was a trifle careless as to the superficial conventionalities and said "damn" with occasional vehemence, the men appeared to regard her as an adventuress, whereas the women offered her the urbane insult of pity to her face, and behind her back arrived at the whispered conclusion that her

husband couldn't really be at fault. In an effort to establish her position she wrote a beautiful little essay, most respectably dull, on the work of Mr. George Gordon, later Lord Byron, and read it before the Wednesday Club. As her hat was rather attractive and her figure showed to excellent advantage on the platform, the address was considered a success.

Yet boredom is the simple word that chronicles her condition. The great sprawling city, so near and so remote, called her softly home, and held out a hand of iron gloved with velvet. And because of that appeal a curious situation was drawn into being.

There came a day when her uncle, her aunt, and her cousin went forth for a visit to certain old friends in a city some miles south. To this affair she was invited, but was wise enough to decline, perceiving that the trip was, after all, one of the usual miserable attempts to drag up old associations by the nape of the neck for present view, and perceiving, too, that in this she could play but the merest walking-on part.

Spring was in the air; and in the invariable delight of the burgeoning season, the ironic woman could have embarked upon any argosy. Out of her window across the way a deserted garden proclaimed its shame in buds, but told of the light and passing love of former owners. The spirit of singing, shouting, blustering life, its staggering advances that are but as retreats, its tumultuous aspirations and sardonic futility surged into her veins; and she craved to join the pageant.

Shallow enough is the realization of poor human emotion, and in this instance she could see no further than a helter-skelter trip to town, an innocent collaboration with one of the jolly men she knew in an attempt to snatch and assemble the pleasures of restaurants, crowds, music, and theaters, and transmute them to an exultant mood of Hedonism.

So, with a little tremor of preparation, she turned on a hot-water tap, and ferreted out a powder-puff.

III

COMING out of the tube into the late afternoon of the big city, she had occasion to reflect a little and sober down to the point of wondering whether she wasn't plunging into a sharp folly. Just how, for instance, would the folks of suburbia consider this flight, how reconcile the all-too-audible flutter of her wings to that illusion of the broken butterfly which she had created? But the step was taken, and out of defiance to her own cowardly hesitation, she refused to retrace it.

She crossed the street to the large hotel that loomed there and sought a telephone operator. A few glances of complimentary appraisal were awarded her by the sad loungers of the lobby as she swept through; and, indeed, she made a fresh and pretty picture.

Assuredly she was tremendously washed—there is no other word for it—and that is a state which inspires a certain self-satisfaction and poise in the least of us. It points out not the fact that one is clean but that other people are dirty; and snobbery in all its infinite classifications is pleasantly soothing to the soul. This is the reason why religion, for instance, means so much to some: they are made aware of their own superiority to the heathen.

At the 'phone-desk she paused, and finally gave the number of Freddy Forrest, a writer of readable illiterature. There was no answer. She might have expected it of gay and gallant Freddy, she thought, Freddy who employed his rooms chiefly as a mausoleum for bills, and never, if he could help it, so much as slept there.

Her second try was handsome Joseph Trevaine, who invariably looked as if he had been starched and ironed simultaneously with his dress-shirt; old Joey, with his pleasant crooked grin and his startling ability to appear ruddy, and bright, and cool-eyed after a night of drinking, or dancing, or general devility. His greeting over the wire was oddly restrained, she fancied, a trifle queer. He made polite queries in the

tone of a householder of some standing and galloped over formalities to a wall of awkward silence. Then the truth came out in a staggering sentence. Since her departure he had gone the way of all flesh: he was married.

A little disheartened, she returned to the corpulent directory and wrinkled her forehead over other possibilities. From Denn Martin, she remembered, she had but recently received a note from the West, whither he had gone to camp in a palace, tramp in a motor-car, and rough it with similar simplicities till autumn.

There was still—and why hadn't she thought of him first?—that slow and sleepy Castilian of the romantic name: Leopold de Sola y Carvajal. He would purr like a cat, watch her with slitted eyes, recount the latest affections of his fellow stage-folk, and shock her deliciously with his fables of ancestral cruelty.

He was called, but through his own endeavors was not chosen. A bad hand at excuses, he merely repeated a mild negative, chopped into tactful segments by ehs and ahs. Wondering whether the whole world had gone mad and married during her temporary retirement, she shot him that question point-blank. His confident laugh was sufficient denial.

"What on earth, then, is the matter, old lad?" she questioned with an unusual note of plaintiveness. "I shan't be angry if you're frank."

She could almost see his smooth, rippling smile, the lazy grace with which he tilted his head, as he made quiet answer: "Well then, if you really must know, I hate to go to the trouble of shaving."

She was amused, therefore magnanimous, and clicked off the connection with pleasantly managed laughter.

But, as she came out, she ran over rather despairingly the potential remainder in her mind. Peter Pope insisted, like his name, on being funny, and wasn't half so successful; Sylvester Rankin would point his mustache, prink himself in a public mirror, and tell her

of his conquests with, "Poor little girl; How she loves me!" for motif; and George Charles Bourke, who really could talk and who really knew things, would eat too much dinner and fatten his self-satisfaction by bullying the waiters. Impossible, oh, impossible! She shuddered over the defects of that disillusioning list.

Was there anyone left? With a little leap of astonishment at the thought she recalled her husband. After all, except for one vivid fault, the man wasn't a bad fellow. Besides he knew her tastes, had gauged her sensibilities. Impulsively she rang him up.

For some unconjectural reason she lightened her voice when he answered and pretended anonymity. If he attempted to flirt with her, not knowing who she was, she would be very, very angry! When he did nothing of the sort, and instead grew brusque and growling, she was even more vexed. Of such inconsistencies are fashioned women—and men. Forced ultimately to reveal herself, she was at last delighted by the correct note of enthusiasm.

"Will I?" he responded to her suggestion. "You bet! Just wait till I fight my way into dress . . . I'll meet you down there in half an hour."

IV

He emptied his glass and looked at her gravely. "Why didn't you answer my letters?" he asked.

"It would merely have been conducting matrimony by correspondence," she told him. "Besides I don't care to argue through the mails."

She studied him silently for a moment. He was effective in his way, she concluded, with his lean fingers knotted together above the cloth and his head bent deferentially in her direction: rather like a decent illustration. His features were pleasingly definite, his lips very clean though not ascetic, and his eyes had an attractive twinkle in them when he smiled. She wondered for half a space whether he hadn't been tamed by her departure, wondered

whether he mightn't be possible henceforth. Surely a renewed life with him would have more of zest in it, more of happy briskness, than a continued career of idle floating, an undeclared swan, on the placid duck-pond of suburbia.

A glance about her brought a quiver of amusement to her lips at the consideration of how odd a setting was this crowded little restaurant for any reconciliation scene. A reckless orchestra crashed forth pieces intended to be polite with a gusto of rowdyism. People talked, laughed, ate, and the innumerable varieties of sound were compounded, like the disagreeable ingredients of a cocktail, into one smooth blend of alluring din. This was the profounder intoxication, the well-bred revelry of selfish, separate humans bound for a space in a fellowship of pleasure.

They took a second cocktail and in a stir of daring she flung a challenge to her life of the last few months and ordered a third and a bottle of particular Sauterne besides. After that she owned to a greater respect for certain modern poetasters. For she, too, was conscious of a swirl of tinted sounds and audible colors split with spirals of light. Everything was as it should be. "The devil's up from hell," she sang, "and all's right with the world." She considered this monstrously witty and repeated it to her husband.

He examined the idea solemnly, then put the tips of his fingers together. "Yes," he said slowly, "I think you are quite right." Nor did he attempt to contradict her in any other way. And for all that her mind was become somewhat hectic, she struggled, even in that hour, to determine whether his irritating trait was cured or merely concealed. She could arrive at no decision.

To follow them through their course that evening it is essential that we visit a REVUE. To the couple under observation the thing appeared to sparkle and shine; never were jokes so pungent, or a ballet more becomingly uncostumed. The bombast of brass, the grave monotony of pigskin, the feminine muta-

THE WHIMSICAL ADVENTURE

bility of catgut furnished an appropriate accompaniment to their emotions.

When they came forth, he suggested an after-theater supper at a restaurant of the sort where one may forget the food by watching the performance, or may forget the performance by eating the food, and where many attempt to forget both by drinking too much. The suggestion had its appeal for her, for though by this she had gotten herself discreetly in hand, and could afford to laugh at the little fling upon which the present had barely shut its massive door, she felt, none the less, that the evening lacked the correct climax, left some intangible desire unsatiated.

The place tickled her, it was so ostentatiously refined as to be coarse; and, moreover, it called up a refreshing contrast to that center of dullness to which she must presently return. It was not hard to counterfeit a certain gaiety in that atmosphere, and she owned to an unaccountable impulse to flirt with her husband.

He responded by growing ponderously sentimental, advanced the theory of reincarnation, and claimed as a surety that they had known and loved in other days. Perhaps, ran the phrasing of his romantic fancies, medievalism had accepted them as plundering baron and a great king's daughter; or else she ogled him in the days of the Regent and reclaimed him from dicing and drinking with the bucks of the town; or again—

But here she interrupted him with a laugh, protested that she could never have had a taste for reclamations, and thrust fun at his theme. Still to her the pretty theory of reincarnation—if there was any truth in it—seemed very likely an opportunity for Fate to play a series of little jokes. Who knows? It may be that Washington was once Ananias, that Queen Victoria was previously Cleopatra.

There fell a pause in their careless talk, and they looked at each other for a moment of diffident silence. Then, despite herself, the woman's glance trembled and fell. As if to recover her

composure by snatching at some prosaic act, she looked at her watch. She looked at it quite a long while.

When she lifted her eyes, she said in a tired voice:

"I've missed the last train."

V

A SITUATION of this order she had hardly reckoned upon; and you may readily imagine that she was disposed to regret the mood that had hurled her haphazard into the venture. Well, she must search out a hotel for the night, and slip away in the morning to suburbia, with some satisfactory excuse concocted for her relatives.

The man lifted his eyebrows at this, and pronounced the plan rot; why the dickens couldn't she come home with him? After all, in spite of the hour they were sitting up together, he was her husband; and, further, she must have some curiosity concerning the apartment he had taken since her flight. As for servants to raise a bother, there were none; he dined regularly at his club, and, when his rooms wept for it, had a woman in to clean up and steal his handkerchiefs. Besides this he wanted to talk to her, perhaps she might reconsider, she might—

He broke off at the right instant and had the intelligence to let his silence play peroration.

She hesitated, hesitated, then made him a feminine rejoinder. "Well, I don't suppose I can do anything else. A hotel would hardly welcome me at this hour in this gown and without a scrap of baggage. So I'll have to go back with you, anyway."

A taxi bounced them to the door, where they woke a negro at the switchboard, or at least stirred him into a state of sleep-walking. Certainly he carried them in the elevator to the precise floor with his eyes still shut.

The little apartment of five rooms was wrapped in cosy airs, she thought, and she examined the arrangement of many familiar things with interested and even approving eyes. A litter of sprawling poker-chips and a stray slipper were

almost the only visible symbols of bachelordom.

She thrust her wraps aside and sank into a chair while he hunted up cigarettes and some bottled beer. She ruminated with a faint smile on what a shocking picture this would make in the opinion of her aunt's eminently respectable world.

"Dear, hasn't your vacation lasted long enough?" he asked softly as he drew up a seat.

"I'm afraid not," she answered casually.

He pressed for a reason; she countered; he returned the attack and left himself unguarded. A vicious little blow, all impulsively delivered, went home smarting, and the sting of it made him lose his head. From that instant he revealed his old gift for general contrariness, revealed the fact that he had been play-acting during the evening. Once the thing was out, she was hardly startled at the discovery, for she was aware of the extent to which the habit dominated him, and had, even in a mood of doubt, felt him not sufficiently forceful ever to dominate it.

"You're quite the same," she said sorrowfully. "I really think I like you, but I know now that I can never live with you again."

"You're wrong. You don't like me. And I've changed a lot. And you could live with me if you wanted to." He amplified all three with a versatile tongue, and replenished his glass.

Wearied she made some sharp remark. Their voices rose, intermingled, grew metallic.

"You're — you're so contradictory," she breathed rather vehemently, "that the only way to make you admit it is to declare you agree with everything that's said. For you'd deny that immediately and thus, for once, speak the sober truth."

He had nothing to say to this, and said it.

"Well, what are you going to do?" he queried finally. "Live forever at land's end? Stagnate with a prosy crowd of provincials? Eh? I know

you well enough to know that you can't be good unless you're a little bad. You'll have to come back to town, my lady, and that's sober enough truth."

Her voice was cold, but a flame was in her eyes. "You're right. I can't live down there much longer. And I'm coming back to town. But I'm going to divorce you."

He blasphemed under the guise of prayer, murmuring, "My God!" in the usual whisper. Then he apologized for his conduct, attempted to retract, to destroy the impression that had so inadvertently stepped forth. He humiliated himself, tossed his pride to the upper airs, and begged her to spare him that blow to vanity which poets and such silly folk term a broken heart. At the end he discovered her unmoved; he had pushed all his chips into the pot and yet not forced her to drop out.

Then, quite suddenly, a different aspect of the thing took his attention, and he broke into confident laughter.

"Go ahead!" he urged, and heaved with mirth. "Get a divorce—if you can. But you'll have pretty damned hard work to find anything against me, and by the Lord I wouldn't bring charges against you if I could!"

She did not receive this intelligence unpleasantly. "Well, I don't know," she murmured, "I invariably manage to do what I want to. Better look out, old man!"

"Oh, come to bed," he growled, thoroughly restored to good humor, "and I won't have to look out. And what the deuce do you mean by keeping your present husband up half the night?"

She put her hands on his shoulders and shook her head. "It's too bad you're such an old grouch," she said.

VI

THE morning train swung her homewards. As she sat there, staring absently through the window, she listed credible explanations for her absence. She disliked departing from the truth, not from any particular respect for veracity, but from a desire to be frankly herself on every occasion. Still it

would not do in this instance to inform her uncle that she had fled to town for a theater-party with her husband; he couldn't possibly understand.

Then when she arrived at the large house, she was agreeably surprised to discover that her relatives had not yet returned. Her own absence had apparently passed unnoticed, for when she came downstairs a moment later from her room, a maid gave her good morning under the obvious impression that she had spent the night there. So now the only lie necessary was silence.

She loitered about and managed to saunter through the long morning—for she had reached there early—with excessive weariness. Her uncle entered in due course, embraced her in his effusive fashion and asked whether she had been lonely during his absence.

She replied with the expected affirmative.

A telephone called him shortly after luncheon, and the call seemed to be considerably protracted. When he appeared again, his face wore a radiant flush. He held out both hands to her.

"My dear," he said huskily; "my dear! I have very good news for you." He stopped and scratched his chin with a slightly nervous air.

To the ironic woman the phrase "good news" invariably meant that excellent luck had befallen the individual who uttered it. So she awaited his disclosures with mere polite interest.

"I don't know how to tell you," he burst forth with sudden volcanic energy. "Upon my word I don't! . . . My dear, I knew you were too finely fibred to—ahem! My dear, I—er—confound it all!"

Drawing himself up rather desperately, he essayed a fresh start and managed to tumble through the gist of his announcement.

"Unknown to you, I have had detectives watching your husband. I knew you were wretched—oh wretched!—with him, but that you were too much of a lady to take—ah, such steps as I er—took. At any rate, the bureau has just 'phoned me that last night he was

tracked—er—shadowed, I believe, is the technical term—to a restaurant with some unknown woman—unfortunate creature!—and after that a theater, and er—that she subsequently returned with him to his apartment—ahem! So the evidence is quite complete."

Here the old gentleman came to a full stop, very much out of wind, very purple in the countenance. He waited anxiously for his niece to totter. But for once she was unkind enough to refuse him his tithe of theatricalism.

She was reviewing the situation in a flash of irony. The grotesque humor of the thing enchanted her, and beyond that there loomed a compelling and fantastic idea. Over that idea, its opportunities and its hazards, her mind hung perilously for a tremendous second. Suddenly her lips slid into a curve that could hardly be called a smile.

"Thank you, uncle," she said. "I— I appreciate what you have done for me. Will you engage a reliable lawyer for the case?"

VII

To direct your attention—in this last act—to the final courtroom scene is the frank demand of tradition; but, if I may, I shall give myself some tether from the usual path. It is but fair, however, to itemize the properties and mark down the positions of the players.

Picture, therefore, an ancient magistrate with a face lined with the suffering that follows from sleeping for many years in a straight-backed chair; drowsy clerks mumbling and toiling like so many bees without stings; the ironic woman, discreetly veiled, soberly clad; the old gentleman in his normal tumult of agitation; two fat detectives, one thoughtfully chewing gum, the other gazing wistfully into his derby; the husband, fretful, angry, perplexed; and the inevitable tangle of lawyers, witnesses and officials.

As for the rest I turn to the papers (who found the thing scarlet enough for a column) and glean for you in briefer fashion the stripped facts. It may be set forth in passing that the core-

spondent was listed as "unknown"; and that our friend, the negro elevator-man had not been so much asleep on a certain night as he appeared. In fact during the course of the short hearing he sadly set forth his attempts to extort hush-money from the defendant, and the indignant fashion in which he was repulsed.

The affair, had, of course, its climactic moment, one which the ironic woman had looked forward to with foreboding. When things had reached a point, her husband, who had ridiculously refused counsel, leapt to his feet with the declaration that the mysterious co-respondent was his wife. The eleventh-hour revelation is generally productive of a muddled havoc in which the justice perceives himself to have been the criminal and various persons in the courtroom discover that they are each other's children. Yet in this curious instance it was the burlesque note that was struck; a titter ran through the room.

The magistrate, conscious of some grave breach of the respect due his profound mind, brought down his gavel with a crack. And when with his own venerable ears he heard the defendant again attempt that explanation, he regarded the thing as a definite attempt

against his dignity, warned the gentleman to have a care lest he incur, as well as reveal, contempt of court, and hurried the case through in a pale rage.

The press summary really requires no polishing. At the end, runs the account, "worn out with strain and exhaustion, she broke down and went off into hysterical laughter."

There is certainly no doubt that the lady laughed very hard.

I am disappointed, however, that there was made no mention of the husband's conduct when the decision was handed down. But the papers are, after all, so many printed sycophants which pretend to the dull man that the world is as commonplace as he is, that the surface of every sea is the mirror of its depths, that the unusual is immoral and the strange untrue. So perhaps it is expecting a trifle too much of them to desire them to probe through the fact that the defendant stared at the plaintiff with a sour twist to his lips and a cynical light in his eyes.

His position, it must be granted, was unique. For he was staring at his recent wife, and at the co-respondent who had separated them, and yet—he was staring at only one woman.



TELL ME OF YOUR LOVE

By William F. Jenkins

TELL me of your love. Chant to me the praises of the Most Adorable. Describe, inaccurately and enthusiastically, her charms—particularly her nose. I take great interest in noses. Talk to me about her lips, the rich, red curve that drives you to ecstatic madness. And forget not her eyes—hazel, are they? Some day they will seem a watery blue, but now. . . . Tell me of her silken hair, that crowns her like a glowing coronet of glory. . . .

Tell me of your love. I always did like to listen to dampfoolishness.



PROSPERITY is the condition of being so wealthy that one can afford to wear imitation jewels.

PROSE LIBRE

By Sidney L. Hydeman

HE was an uncommon-looking old man, and when I saw him stand up on the homemade platform in Union Square his appearance immediately arrested my attention. He didn't look like the ordinary sort of al fresco Savonarola, the sort that forces his religious theories on that portion of the public that has nothing else to do but stand around and listen. He had a venerable gray beard, soft looking and neatly trimmed and his clothes, though apparently poor in quality, were obviously very carefully kept. When he took off his hat, as he did with a slight and graceful bow, it was seen that, despite his age, his head was well covered with glistening grayish hair. "Gather around folks," he shouted pleasantly. "I have something I want to tell you. His words brought up six or eight passersby, but apparently he was not satisfied. "Gather around," he repeated. "I must have twenty to tell this to. Twelve-thirteen-sixteen—" And I saw his eye fall on the twenty men. A smile lighted up his benevolent old face. "Now gentlemen," he said, his hand gracefully stroking his beard, "go to hell."



THE NEW MOON

By Sara Teasdale

(From a Hospital Window)

DAY, you have bruised and beaten me
As rain beats down the bright proud sea,
Beaten my body, bruised my soul,
Left me nothing lovely or whole—
Yet I have wrested a gift from you,
Day that dies in dusky blue.

For suddenly over the factories
I saw a moon in the cloudy seas—
A wisp of beauty all alone
In a world as hard and grey as stone—
Oh, who could be bitter and want to die
When a maiden moon wakes up in the sky?



GOOD-BYE!*

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

By Jules Renard

Translated from the French by Barrett H. Clark

CHARACTERS:

BLANCHE

MAURICE

THE scene is a small drawing-room in a fifth-story apartment in Paris. Evidently the room of a woman of small means, but one who has loved. It breathes an air of intimacy, and is decorated with odds and ends—presents—and various articles of furniture. At the back of the stage is a fire-place; at the right, a doorway with portières; a table to the right; a sofa in the center. On the other side of the stage is an open piano. A modest bouquet of flowers is on a small table. A few pictures on the walls. There is also a lighted lamp on a small table behind the sofa.

BLANCHE is seated at the table, in a loose house-dress, trimmed with old laces; they are her only luxury, her sole heirloom. She has evidently been through her bureau drawers and torn up a lot of old letters. She keeps only a small packet of them, which she has tied with a ribbon, and is now re-reading one of the letters. Or rather she is re-reading only certain familiar sentences of it, which make her sad. Another letter makes her shake her head; a third brings a frank and open smile to her lips. The door-bell rings. Without haste, she puts the letters back into a box, which she puts into the table drawer. Then she rises and opens the door.

(Enter MAURICE. His manner and tone at once proclaim him to be at home.)

MAURICE

(With emphasis.) How are you, my dear, my beautiful friend?

BLANCHE

(Less affected.) Hello, dear. (Maurice is about to kiss her, as usual, out of politeness, and in order to smooth the way before the tempest which he

knows is about to break, but she recoils.)

No!

MAURICE

For old acquaintance' sake!

BLANCHE

Not now—any more.

MAURICE

I don't in the least object.

BLANCHE

Nor do I, but, you see—there's no use. Did you do everything you had to do?

* The performance of this play without permission is strictly forbidden.

GOOD-BYE!

MAURICE

(He lays his hat and cane on a chair, and sits at the left of the fire-place, warming his hands before the fire. He tries to appear at ease. Blanche has meanwhile re-seated herself by the table.) Yes, and I'm tired out. I wonder why I can't go to sleep a bachelor and wake up a married man? I went to the *mairie* first, then everywhere you can imagine—from one office to the other, asking all sorts of questions of a heap of sour-faced officials who didn't seem in the least excited over my marriage. Then I went to the tailor to try on my clothes. He thinks I ought to have a little padding here: you know one of my shoulders is a little lower than the other?

BLANCHE

I never noticed it.

MAURICE

I can confess now—now, that you don't care one way or the other.

BLANCHE

I'll never tell a soul.

MAURICE

Then I went to the church. It seems I've got to confess!

BLANCHE

Of course: you must cleanse your soul entirely.

MAURICE

Some people tell me that the confession card can be bought, others that I may happen to get a cross old priest who will ask me: "Are you a Christian, yes or no? If you are, then kneel, and examine your conscience." How ridiculous I'll look, with my patent-leather shoes scraping the marble pavement! Pleasant little quarter of an hour to look forward to!

BLANCHE

I rather think it will take you more than a quarter of an hour. Poor dear! But your fiancée will so appreciate the sacrifice.

MAURICE

(Rising and leaning against the mantel above the fire-place.) I feel all topsy-turvy. Tell me—(hesitatingly) dearest, you're not going to desert me, are you? You are surely coming to the wedding?

BLANCHE

Does your invitation still hold good?

MAURICE

Of course: the religious ceremony, you know.

BLANCHE

Very well, I'll come.

MAURICE

I'll expect you. (Coldly.) We'll have a pleasant time! (With a little attempt at gayety.) You especially! You'll see me walk down the steps of the church, the little one in white clinging to my arm.

BLANCHE

You'll do it very nicely, I know.

MAURICE

In spite of myself, eh? Oh, I can tell you everything. (He sits down on the sofa, face to face with Blanche.) You know, I can't help thinking of those awful vitriol stories you hear about.

BLANCHE

Oh, you're trying to sound me? Well, dear, don't worry—you look so frightened. You are afraid—you're assuming the defensive; your hand's on your sword hilt. Dear, dear, the saints will laugh in their niches, and you'd deserve their derision! No, no, don't be afraid of vitriol—I might burn my dress!

MAURICE

Tease! But you're wrong: I'm not afraid: I'm even going to introduce you to my wife—as a relative, of course.

BLANCHE

Yes, as a possible governess for your children. Later on, I can take care of them when you go traveling!

MAURICE

Ah, so bitter-sweet already! That's a bad beginning.

BLANCHE

You make me tired with your system of compensations! (*She rises, and gives Maurice a florist's card, together with that of Madame Paulin.*) I've been to the florist's; she's going to supply you with a ten-franc bouquet every morning.

MAURICE

Ten francs?

BLANCHE

Yes, I bargained with her. That's not dear, for this cold weather.

MAURICE

No—not if the flowers are pretty, and if they're delivered to the house.

BLANCHE

Oh, they will be. I asked Madame Paulin to get you a ring, a fan, a candy-box, and a number of pretty little odds and ends. I told her you wanted to be generous, but not foolishly extravagant.

MAURICE

Evidently. (*Showing signs of nervousness.*) When do the bills fall due?

BLANCHE

Whenever you are ready to pay them—later—after the wedding.

MAURICE

(*Reassured.*) Thank you. (*He rises, and they separate.*) Really, you are not at all like other women.

BLANCHE

No woman is. But what sort of woman am I?

MAURICE

(*Taking her hand.*) You are a woman of tact.

BLANCHE

But we've agreed, you know, to all this?

MAURICE

Of course, even to this last visit. We've done everything to perfection. This is my last visit: we shan't see each other again.

BLANCHE

Except as friends—that's what you said only a few minutes ago.

MAURICE

Yes, but not otherwise. You know, when I was coming up-stairs, I was rather apprehensive.

BLANCHE

Why?

MAURICE

Because—

BLANCHE

I don't feel a bit like scolding or blaming you. I knew it would be like this. And if it was painful to break off—

MAURICE

It wasn't that we had come to the end: we loved each other almost as much as ever.

BLANCHE

But today our hearts are absolutely severed. In this little package I've buried the last remains: a few photographs, your birth certificate—I was curious to see it—how young you still are!

MAURICE

How can a man grow old with you?

BLANCHE

—and a book I borrowed from you. That's all.

MAURICE

Well, well! It's really a pleasure to break off with you!

BLANCHE

With you, too!

MAURICE

We have done precisely the right thing. How rare such a thing is! We have loved as deeply as it was possible to love, the way you love only once in a life-time, and we are separating because it is necessary to separate. There is no touch of bitterness, no treachery or deceit.

BLANCHE

We are putting our finest efforts into it.

MAURICE

We are giving an ideal example. Oh, Blanche, you may rest assured that if

anyone ever speaks evil of you, it will not be I.

BLANCHE

As for me, I'll never speak evil of you, either—unless it is absolutely necessary. (*She sits to the right, Maurice to the left, of the table.*) Are you going to give me back my photograph?

MAURICE

No, I'm going to keep that.

BLANCHE

I think you had better either give it to me or else tear it up, rather than put it away in some trunk.

MAURICE

I insist on keeping it; if I am ever asked who the original is, I shall say it is an actress who did splendid work in a play I once saw.

BLANCHE

What about my letters?

MAURICE

Those two or three impersonal shop-keeper-to-customers letters—

BLANCHE

I hate writing.

MAURICE

Well, I shall keep those, too. They may serve to clear me some day.

BLANCHE

Please don't be alarmed! Let's speak of the wedding. Have you seen the little one today?

MAURICE

For about five minutes only. She's so busy with her trousseau. Think, the great day is drawing nigh!

BLANCHE

Does she like pretty things?

MAURICE

When they are expensive.

BLANCHE

Tell her blue is becoming to blondes. I have a nice new style-book I'll be glad to lend you. Has she taste?

MAURICE

She follows the fashion.

BLANCHE

She must be a little afraid of you?

MAURICE

I hope she is.

BLANCHE

What does she behave like when you are with her? How does she look, act?

MAURICE

She behaves like a piece of covered upholstery.

BLANCHE

Tell me truly, do you consider her pretty?

MAURICE

You are the pretty one!

BLANCHE

I was referring to *her*; do you consider her pretty?

MAURICE

As pretty and refreshing as—Spring!

BLANCHE

So she really pleases you? Tell me the truth!

MAURICE

Well, she *displeases* me less and less.

BLANCHE

Do you remember that I was the first to call your attention to her?

MAURICE

The tip was an excellent one.

BLANCHE

(*Cutting the leaves of a book.*) I flatter myself! Is she capricious—moody? (*Maurice, in despair, does not answer. Blanche touches his sleeve.*) What are you looking at?

MAURICE

I'm filling my eyes—with everything. I'm taking stock—for future remembrance. All these flowers give your little *salon* quite a festive air.

BLANCHE

Is she capricious—headstrong?

MAURICE

She likes everything that I like.

BLANCHE

That's fortunate.

MAURICE

Yes: it won't be necessary to have two kinds of cooking.

BLANCHE

You are very clever this evening.

MAURICE

My last fireworks, you see.

BLANCHE

Aren't you rather ashamed to talk that way about the young lady who is to become your wife?

MAURICE

Is it your place to reproach me? You know very well I am assuming this tone in order to make myself agreeable to you.

BLANCHE

Now please don't let's get sentimental!

MAURICE

I'm not getting sentimental; we are simply chatting over our own little affairs. Monsieur Guireau himself might listen.

BLANCHE

Never mind Monsieur Guireau. (*She rises, and walks about slowly.*)

MAURICE

Why? Your marriage interests me as much as my own, dear. I don't want to seem more selfish than you. If my future interests you, why shouldn't yours interest me? We are discussing the affairs of both of us.

BLANCHE

Yes—but, please, let's talk about something else. (*She sits down, left of the fireplace.*)

MAURICE

Oh, no. I am telling you about my future wife, and I have a right to know about your future husband. Otherwise,

I'll have to assume that you are hiding something from me. This reciprocal inquisition is the best proof of our absolute sincerity, and confidence in each other. I have no reason on earth to be jealous of Monsieur Guireau; I even want to meet and know him. I've just had a glimpse of him and he produced a splendid impression on me at once. Does he call on you often?

BLANCHE

Regularly—once every two weeks.

MAURICE

A good sign! Steady and faithful. What is his name?

BLANCHE

Guireau.

MAURICE

No, no: his given name?

BLANCHE

At his age no man has any.

MAURICE

But what do you call him?

BLANCHE

I call him Monsieur Guireau.

MAURICE

On all occasions?

BLANCHE

On all occasions. Have you finished examining me, Your Honor?

MAURICE

I think it highly amusing. You might allow me a little innocent merriment.

BLANCHE

Go on, then.

MAURICE

What do you do?

BLANCHE

What should we do?

MAURICE

Doesn't he even kiss the tips of your fingers?

BLANCHE

Scarcely. We talk. He's a good

talker. He gives me advice—tells me to beware of intriguing men. He's a first-rate musician, too. Sometimes he brings his violin. (*Maurice looks searchingly into her eyes.*) And then he takes it away.

MAURICE

And, afterward—when conversation flags and the music ceases?

BLANCHE

I think you're overstepping the limits. (*She rises.*) I have a right not to answer.

MAURICE

Would you rather I guessed the rest?

BLANCHE

Guessed what? You're too ready to jump at conclusions. There are other things in life for me—from today on—more serious, more practical. It won't be any sacrifice on my part. I rather enjoy the rôle I am to play: I can live without kisses.

MAURICE

Oh, oh!

BLANCHE

But I can! Monsieur Guireau behaves himself. He's merely a fatherly sort of friend. I feel really very friendly and sympathetic toward him; he is satisfied with that. (*She sits down on the sofa.*)

MAURICE

He must be a frugal sort of old boy.

BLANCHE

I think I am very fortunate: well-bred men are so rare nowadays. Monsieur Guireau's manners belong to the last century. He warns me of his visits two days in advance.

MAURICE

And does his conversation never lapse into the sentimental?

BLANCHE

He respects me. He is assured of living with a woman who is at least not disagreeable, who will smile at him, listen patiently to him, keep his house, receive his friends, take care of and

never bore him. Monsieur Guireau will not even allow me to promise him anything further.

MAURICE

(*Picking up the little package and holding it.*) What if he were to learn of our past?

BLANCHE

He would never think of showing that he suspected anything.

MAURICE

(*Rising.*) A splendid fellow! He's making an end of things himself. So am I, and so are you. Three people winding up their affairs at one time. It's a veritable catastrophe.

BLANCHE

In which there are no victims.

MAURICE

I have one more question, but remember, I'm only asking it just for fun, as children say, "Which do you love better, Papa or Mamma?" (*Gravely.*) Would you give up Monsieur Guireau for my sake?

BLANCHE

I think that as matters stand there is no sense in that question.

MAURICE

(*Sits down face to face with her.*) I ask it in fun—answer in fun!

BLANCHE

Do you remember one night when you were so wrought up, and you asked me to marry you and go away with you and live in a little hut—in Algiers, where living is so cheap? What did I answer?

MAURICE

(*Weighing his words.*) That you were afraid, desperately afraid, of poverty; that the thought of dry crusts, even though they were eaten in our *home*, inspired you with disgust; that you detested moving about, that you weren't good at roughing it, and that the only thing you could do with your hands and arms was to caress. That is the answer you made me.

BLANCHE

But you have been comfortably well-off for some time, now.—Is that all?

MAURICE

That is all. (*Blanche rises and walks toward the fireplace.*) When is the wedding to take place?

BLANCHE

Which?

MAURICE

Yours.

BLANCHE

Oh, there's no hurry.

MAURICE

If I were in your place, I should decide on a date—it's wiser.

BLANCHE

It's going to be next year.

MAURICE

So you need a whole winter to—air—your heart? You are wrong. (*He rises and goes toward the fireplace.*) Once you've decided, you ought to plunge right in, head-first—the way I am doing.

BLANCHE

(*Both leaning against the fireplace.*) I suppose it would be ideal for our weddings to take place on the same day?

MAURICE

Why not? You know I think a great deal of Monsieur Guireau.

BLANCHE

I am sure he would appreciate you.

MAURICE

It would be very piquant to introduce us.

BLANCHE

I shan't try to bring that about—nor shall I try to avoid it. Monsieur Guireau knows life.

MAURICE

Just like my fiancée's mother—she, too, knows life. She understands—she knows that I have had other love affairs, that I have gone through the ordeal.

She is perfectly satisfied if I break off my last affair a reasonable time before the wedding.

BLANCHE

So much the worse if her daughter is jealous of the past!

MAURICE

Her mother will explain to her.

BLANCHE

She must be a fine woman.

MAURICE

She is a woman of remarkable good sense; simple and gay. She knows her business. (*He sits in the same chair that Blanche occupied at the rise of the curtain.*)

BLANCHE

So you have really won the heart of the young lady?

MAURICE

Absolutely.

BLANCHE

I trust it will last!

MAURICE

If I am not sure of the daughter, I am of her mother. When she looks at my photograph she says: "The dear boy simply cannot be bad—that's what I say, or I'm no judge of faces. He'll make Berthe happy."

BLANCHE

She is right: I'm sure you will make a model husband. You have all the necessary qualities.

MAURICE

Yes, my dear, and I am positive you will make a model wife. He is sure to be happy with you.

BLANCHE

Berthe will be happy with you, too. Poor little thing! (*A long pause, then Blanche goes to Maurice. They are face to face, separated only by the table.*) I should like to see you making love to her.

MAURICE

I am not too much embarrassed to do so, I can tell you.

GOOD-BYE!

BLANCHE

Do you do it well?

MAURICE

Exactly as I did it with you.

BLANCHE

And—do you make much progress with her heart?

MAURICE

I hope so. I even think that she causes me less suffering than you did.

BLANCHE

You are very clever and witty—that's the second time!

MAURICE

And you resisted me longer.

BLANCHE

It was not coquetry on my part. I thought my life as a woman had come to an end, and I hesitated to enter into another affair of the heart. The others hadn't got me anywhere. You know—without doing it on purpose—I never loved any but poor men—

MAURICE

I see, and my ten thousand a year didn't—?

BLANCHE

And I was thinking of a reasonable marriage. I was waiting only for the chance—I confess it. But you seemed so young! You were as awkward as a little soldier—and so thin—so frighteningly thin!

MAURICE

But I've taken on flesh since.

BLANCHE

Thank me for that. You fattened under my care; I am passing you on in good condition.

MAURICE

After certain repairs to the heart!

BLANCHE

Oh!

MAURICE

I mean—I should be only too glad to renew the lease.

BLANCHE

I shouldn't. You are no longer the same as before. I took you when you were merely a child; you go away a man. I prefer the child. You were rather homely, and time has—

MAURICE

Improved me?

BLANCHE

No: sat heavy on your brow—faded you. You are less interesting, less romantic. You used to say poetic things that came, as it were, from another world. I declare, it seemed at times as if you were speaking in verse.

MAURICE

Sometimes I was—but the words weren't mine. I was quoting—but I had to be careful. I remember I risked a few lines of Musset in my first declaration of love—the one you read to my predecessor.

BLANCHE

What? Do you think me capable of being so indelicate as that?

MAURICE

I do, because you told me—later—whispered it in my ear.

BLANCHE

I—I'm astonished!

MAURICE

I declare you did. And he laughed—that predecessor. So did you. That was very unkind!

BLANCHE

Very. I began by making fun of you: that's in the natural course of events. And you would have ended by making fun of me, if I hadn't taken the bull by the horns.

MAURICE

In the natural course of events!

BLANCHE

Then, my affection for you has always been tinged with a certain gayety. It was so amusing to mold you. Really, without bragging, if you have de-

veloped from a merely intelligent to a distinguished man, you owe it to me. Now you have style, distinction: you never swear, you address ladies politely, and don't keep your cigarette in your mouth while you are doing it; you wear gloves and save your hands; you look after your business with some regularity. I taught you how to wear American garters that keep your socks looking well, and fasteners for your neckties. They keep in place now.

MAURICE

And in return, I have taught you the proper way to address letters and write numbers. Your 3's looked like dromedaries.

BLANCHE

And I made you have your hair cut differently, and taught you how to tie your cravat.

MAURICE

And a good deal besides.

BLANCHE

You weren't slow to learn!

MAURICE

I was so ready and willing.

BLANCHE

Nor were you ungrateful. I have a proof of your gratitude which is very dear to me. I shall keep it.

MAURICE

A proof?

BLANCHE

You know that every letter I received from you—I couldn't cure you of the dangerous habit of writing—I burned?

MAURICE

Without reading it?

BLANCHE

I read it, but burned it immediately after.

MAURICE

Posterity will judge you harshly.

BLANCHE

I kept one; I couldn't bear to destroy it. I simply *had* to keep it. It tells of

the happiness that you owe me: it's a sort of certificate of our love and of your gratitude.

MAURICE

It must be very long.

BLANCHE

Four pages—small hand.

MAURICE

Long letters come from the heart.

BLANCHE

This one came direct from yours. I was re-reading it when you came in just now—I couldn't help myself.

MAURICE

Where is it? Let me see it—

BLANCHE

I never show my letters.

MAURICE

But I was the one who wrote it!

BLANCHE

That's true. Very well. Now, stand over there! (She rises, goes to where Maurice has been sitting, opens the drawer, and takes out the box, which she shows him. Maurice stands near the table.)

MAURICE

Hm! Almond-cake box!

BLANCHE

I forbid you to laugh!

MAURICE

So that's where you hide your letters?

BLANCHE

Yours is the only one I hide there. There are only two or three family jewels besides.

MAURICE

I recognize the yellow envelope—and the stationery. I wrote that in a café. I had just come from you. In my finger-tips, which had touched you, there remained something of the love with which you had inspired me. My handwriting must have been execrable!

GOOD-BYE!

BLANCHE

The very best of you was in that letter.

MAURICE

Yes, I recall all I felt as I sat at that little marble table, so cold, and where I felt the deep-seated need to reward you in some way, sing my gratitude to you.

BLANCHE

There's no date, name, or signature.

MAURICE

Yes, I remember, I remember. It begins right away, like a hymn.

BLANCHE

(Reading the letter): "You are beautiful and you are good. I adore every bit of you, body, heart, soul—and everything else—" (She smiles.)

MAURICE

(Interrupting). What a beautiful book might be written about our love!

BLANCHE

(Pointing to the letter.) A verbatim copy of this would do. (She continues reading, skipping certain sections as she does so): "You are so indulgent toward others' faults that you make others love your own. You are modest, and the good qualities of your mind never make you proud. You want people to say of you, 'She is a delightful and wonderful woman,' and not, 'She is a superior woman!'" Well! "You never speak ill of others until they speak ill of you. If, sometimes, you do not tell the truth—" Do I ever lie?

MAURICE

Oh, very rarely, and in all innocence, the way one dyes one's hair, because you believe it to be merely an added grace—

BLANCHE

(Continuing): "You like to dress yourself charmingly, because clothes add so much to your loveliness; you love the theater because you laugh there; company, because a woman of your age cannot live like a nun." Dear

me! "You are lazy, I must tell you, but only because it seems to you that the rôle of a beautiful woman consists in remaining beautiful; you believe that clothes and other adornments are due her, without her having to ask for them; money, too, board, and lodging—" (She laughs.)

MAURICE

Is that there?

BLANCHE

(Handing him the letter). There—look.

MAURICE

That's true—"You never lose your temper; and you fear, as you would a thunderbolt, every sort of quarrel; you are always willing to give in, for the sake of peace and to avoid discussion, to the man who rushes at you, his eyes blazing, and his face emitting a green light—" (Both laugh.)

BLANCHE

Now that's exaggerated. In that case, I shoud politely invite the gentleman to leave the room.

MAURICE

(Continuing, as he leans on the back of her chair.) "You like to be loved delicately, subtly. You like to be given two sous' worth of violets, a *Baba au rhum*, a bit of lace, or a carriage ride; you appreciate those tiny little attentions that warm the heart of women far more than a kiss."

BLANCHE

Yes, that's the way I like to be loved.

MAURICE

(As he continues, he becomes more and more excited. Blanche turns to one side.) "I scarcely had time to kiss you this evening. That was not enough—I wanted more of you—I wanted to have possession of you. Just as a timid visitor, on leaving the home at which he has called, says over to himself everything which he ought to have said, so I walked, running my hand through my hair, saying to myself: 'I should have liked to put my lips there, and

there; I should never have raised my head a single instant—" *(The letter slips from his hands.)* You are the woman I have always dreamed of! And I am now leaving you!

BLANCHE

(Rising.) Maurice, Maurice, you're wandering from the text!

MAURICE

(Taking her hands in his.) Blanche, I have loved you with all my heart and soul, and I truly believe that now you are my only true wife.

BLANCHE

Dear, dear, please! How excited you are! Now, you're sure to say something foolish. You know I can't allow that. Why make useless trouble?

MAURICE

Blanche, say one little word, and I'll send the little girl and her money to the devil—my reputation and my future! I'll give up everything!

BLANCHE

Would you do that?

MAURICE

This instant. Try—

BLANCHE

(Laying her hands on his shoulders.) Thank you. I am very grateful for that. But I do not want to say the word. I shan't ever say it.

MAURICE

Then—Let me kiss—your eyes—?

BLANCHE

Not even my forehead.

MAURICE

Your lips—! Quick!

BLANCHE

No.

MAURICE

Then I'll—

BLANCHE

Must I ring?

MAURICE

Ring? For whom? Your servants

are away, and your housekeeper won't be here until morning.

BLANCHE

I can defend myself.

MAURICE

Against me?

BLANCHE

I'm not afraid of you.

MAURICE

I—I've got to kiss you again!

BLANCHE

I promise you you will leave without having kissed me any more than you have now.

MAURICE

Blanche, I want you—for the last time. It would be—so wonderful. Original, too—even comic.

BLANCHE

Side-splitting!

MAURICE

Blanche, listen to me!

BLANCHE

I hear. Yes, it would be delicious—just a touch of romance before the wedding invitations are sent out. Lovely! Then you pass from love with a friendly handshake, from one woman to another. Very original—quite a discovery!

MAURICE

At least, it's an idea.

BLANCHE

Why—you're simply ridiculous, disgusting!

MAURICE

The devil! You're the ridiculous one. What scruples! I'd like to know whom we should be harming? Who would ever know?

BLANCHE

I!

MAURICE

Ridiculous—yes, and mean! You refuse simply out of self-love, for the sake of your "dignity," and because you are angry, vexed. *(She shrugs her*

shoulders.) Yes, vexed, at my marrying—as if it weren't all your own doing! Yes, you literally pushed me into her arms, in spite of my own inclination. That's the excuse you make for your own surreptitious machinations. You ought to have sent me away when Monsieur Guireau was waiting at the door.

BLANCHE

Maurice, please—!

MAURICE

And the proof is that at this instant I am willing to sacrifice everything—a fortune, wife, all—for your sake, and you—!

BLANCHE

That only proves that you exaggerate everything, Maurice, and that I am more reasonable than you.

MAURICE

Very well, then, but don't cry.

BLANCHE

I'm not crying.

MAURICE

Stop twisting your arms. I shock you. Very well, I'll go. After all, I insisted only because I thought you wanted me to. But I shan't insist any longer. Good-bye, and good-night. Best regards to Monsieur Guireau! (He starts to go, taking his hat and cane, then laying them down again and returning to Blanche.)

BLANCHE

(Without looking at him, in a melancholy tone.) Did we have to end it so miserably after all? You leave me with insults on your lips. And you came this evening like a good friend, with the intention of being loyal and tender and good to the last. We were proud of each other. Lovers are dear to each other only by reason of the memories they leave behind them, and we were doing our best to leave only pleasant and tender memories. You have spoiled everything!

MAURICE

(Slowly approaching her.) Yes, I

spoil everything. You were an adorable friend, and I have shocked, reviled you. I know it. I always make great promises which I cannot keep. Nothing can change me. I know very well that I shall be the torment of more than one woman in my life. I am going now to the other, who is waiting for me. If she is not an angel of patience, I pity her from the bottom of my heart.

BLANCHE

There you are, blaming yourself! You aren't really bad at bottom, only at times you seem to take pleasure in saying cruel things.

MAURICE

You don't imagine I take pleasure in it, do you?

BLANCHE

I know you don't mean what you say.

MAURICE

No, I don't. But somehow, in spite of myself, they insist on passing through my brain.

BLANCHE

Up to now, you have behaved perfectly. Everything was going so nicely! What's happened to you?

MAURICE

I don't know—a fit of madness—

BLANCHE

I see it was only a momentary slip. Very well, I forgive you. (She offers him her hand.)

MAURICE

You always forgive. But your forgiveness doesn't excuse me. (He takes her hands.) It's my fault. This is all my fault—our breaking off! I'm only a poor fool! The best thing I can do is to take myself off at once. So long as I don't turn up here to-morrow, from sheer force of habit!—Well, what were we saying? Everything is arranged and agreed upon.—You owe me nothing, I owe you nothing—

BLANCHE

Do you want a receipt?

MAURICE

Duly dated and signed, which I should gallantly lay among the wedding-presents on the wedding day—!

BLANCHE

Take care!

MAURICE

Oh, I feel that every word I say now only makes matters worse. Not many minutes ago I must have appeared like a person saying good-bye to a mere travelling-companion. I've arrived at my destination; I get out of the car and bow. My manner is scrupulously correct and utterly banal. I was trying, too, to find and express something deep and profound, something sweet yet decisive, some last word. Yet I can't leave this way—so coldly! My God, inspire a poor man—you, too, my dear friend, my sad and generous friend, you help me.

BLANCHE

I am hurt, and I pity you. Please, dear, don't torture yourself. Don't try to say anything. Now go.

MAURICE

I am going at once. Only—I want to be sure that you are at peace.

BLANCHE

I am. Go, and be happy. . . . Oh,

that little package of yours on the table?

MAURICE

(Having turned to go, returns.) Yes.—If you can, please sleep; it will do your tired nerves good.

BLANCHE

I'll try. I'm so tired. Leave me. I want to be alone.

MAURICE

Rest yourself against that pillow. Shall I turn down the lamp?

BLANCHE

No: it would be too gloomy. Fix the fire, please. I'm freezing. (Maurice arranges the logs in the fireplace, then tip-toes to Blanche, and kisses her hand.) Still here?

MAURICE

Shh! Never mind me: I've gone. There is no one near you—now.

BLANCHE

How empty everything is! How much you are taking away with you!

MAURICE

(At the door.) You still have a beautiful part to play in life! (He goes out. The door closes without a sound.)

CURTAIN



A MAN likes to think that, when he marries, all his old sweethearts will be heartbroken. Instead, they will probably be too busy pitying his bride.



EVERY woman is positive that if she had the proper clothes, she would be as fascinating as Cleopatra.



REMINISCENCE: The first gray hair of youth.

THE GENEROSITY OF ALBERT

By G. Vere Tyler

THREE was something Albert was always wanting to give away.

This spirit of reckless generosity attacked him at the age of thirteen and from that hour he was never freed of it. And the strange part about it was that in spite of his generosity concerning it, Albert greatly valued it. Another strange thing was that no sooner did he get rid of it than he instantly again found it in his possession.

Sometimes in his exuberance he threw it; sometimes he expressed it, or sent it by mail; sometimes he carried it himself. Albert could recall many perilous tramps, one to the top of a very high mountain when the snow was on the ground, and his generosity urgent. Once he sent it by a great ship across the ocean; once on a fast flyer to Chicago. In fact, he had sent it to pretty nearly all the great cities of both

continents, and even to the wilds of Africa. But always at the end of a few hours, or at best a day, he had it back.

There was a period in Albert's life when it was a perfect passion with him to get rid of it. He gave it to girls, old ladies—even babies. If he sent a Christmas present he put it in the box; if a birthday gift it was sure to be included.

There were times when this generous impulse on the part of Albert got him into trouble. The violence of his attempt to bestow it on one occasion very nearly landed him in divorce proceedings; once he barely escaped jail.

But nothing could cure Albert. He spent his life in the interest of this generosity. . . . At eighty he gave it for the last time to his granddaughter. . . . She kept it. . . .

It was Albert's kiss. . . .



SCÈNE D'AMOUR

By Jean Farquar

I PLANNED the setting of my lovers' tale.
A sunken garden,
Sunset flaming in the west,
And the just-beginning hush of dusk
For orchestral adornment
To my wild paean of love.

I asked her to marry me.
It was in a trolley car.



THE ETIOLOGY AND SYMPTOMATOLOGY OF NARCOSIS BY ETHYL ALCOHOL (C₂H₅OH)

By O. F. Howard and Gerald Mygatt

§1

DRINK is a sober matter. We leave it to anyone.

The public necessity for an unimpassioned, analytical inquiry into what, up to now, has been the one unexplored phase of the liquor question was first suggested to the oversigned some months ago by a woman who had devoted the riper years of her life to the cause of national prohibition.

"Our greatest handicap," she confided, "is the fact that the American people, as a whole, do not honestly understand what drunkenness is. Each community has its own definition of the term, each individual defines it in his own particular way. The result is chaos."

We meditated a moment and agreed with her.

"No one," she continued, "has ever straightened this confusion out. Much has been written about drink and the ravages of ethyl alcohol, but not even the ablest authority has so far succeeded in defining intoxication in simple terms—terms that all the people can understand—terms that nobody can evade. There is a crying need for a scientific inquiry into this subject, a crying public need. Codify drunkenness, analyze it, psychoanalyze it, put it all down in black and white. The pathologist who does all this will be doing civilization a service it can never repay."

Thus it was that our exploration and inquiry began. Obstacles were encountered and surmounted. Other obstacles were encountered and not sur-

mounted. On the whole, however, it is fair to say that the research thus undertaken met with a large measure of success.

§2

To define intoxication in simple, comprehensible terms proved at first an amazingly difficult task. Neither the law nor medical authority, we found, had ever been able to do so in a way to satisfy anybody. Nor had the dictionaries. There seemed to be a conspiracy against alcoholic lucidity. As a matter of fact, if you open your dictionary to the proper place you will find something very much like this:

DRUNK: Under the influence of intoxicating liquor to such an extent as to have lost the normal control of one's bodily and mental faculties, and, commonly, to evince a disposition to violence, quarrelsome ness and bestiality; figuratively, saturated and stupefied. *Synonyms: boozy, drunken, elevated, fuddled, full, inebriated, half-seas-over, intoxicated, maudlin, muddled, overcome, sotish, the worse for liquor, tipsy.*

We emphasize this here because in our investigation we heard of the case of a young and sweet and loving wife whose husband came home one evening with a somewhat unaccustomed air of jauntiness and abandon about his person. [The out-of-town customer complex.] For some time she had suspected him [the post-honeymoon complex]; now at last she felt intuitively that the thing she had been dreading had come to her [sussurrarophobia, or, the fear of scandal]. She was puzzled; she scarce-

ly knew what to do; her husband was yielding himself to song in the bathroom [the Orpheus complex]; and finally she bethought herself of the dictionary. That at least, she thought, might help her establish the lineage of his stertorous, Mona Lisa smile. So she tremulously opened it—and found the definition.

Now her husband was certainly not all that. To be truthful, he didn't really seem to be any of it. He had certainly lost no control of any faculties; rather he had gained control. He was undisputedly neither violent nor quarrelsome nor bestial. Perhaps, so the young and sweet and loving wife decided, she had been wrong in her suspicions. Yet as a particularly new and utterly lost chord rang out her heart was thrown once more into full trepidation. If only she could know the truth, one way or the other!

Boozy?—meaningless term. *Elevated*?—possibly. *Saturated*?—not a drip. *Sottish*?—certainly not. *Stupefied*?—listen to him! In frankness these were not the conditions about which the young wife was worrying. What she actually wanted to know was whether or not her husband was *lit*, whether he was carrying a *package* or leading it by the hand, whether he simply had a start or really was wearing the elements of a *bun*. What good was the dictionary here? The old words apparently wouldn't do any more. For in this day and generation one doesn't get *half-seas-over*, but rather goes skidding *three sheets to the wind*. [The George Ade complex.]

§3

Further investigation and study, both in the laboratory and at the bedside, brought out the reason for this. The more one analyzes the phenomena of alcoholic narcosis, the more it becomes manifest that in the past two generations the word *drunk* as a descriptive term has quietly faded out of the best regulated lay conversation. In order to protect the adolescent and marriageable female from visions of de-

serted homes and secret cures in coffee, a number of social euphemisms have been invented. [The taboo complex.] To the purist in speech, no less than to the clinician, this fact seems little short of lamentable; it is decadent. But decadent or not, the euphemisms are with us.

To anyone who studies the subject it becomes evident from the start that intoxication possesses many subtle distinctions, as well as a heraldry which it is well to observe. The niceties of descriptive English alone should induce a contemplation of bibulous synonyms, while the reputation of one's friends demands careful attention to what might be called the historical psychology of their nights' entertainments.

Let us, therefore, examine a few of the more common terms which today take the place in polite social discourse, and even at the bedside, of the old-fashioned word drunk. One has but to mention three of these—say, *piffed*, *soused* and *jagged*—to show the serious limitations an attempt at adequate definition entails. One had better, indeed, mention more than three.

Jag is a serious word to employ and discretion should be exercised before it is freely admitted to the pathological vocabulary. *Jag* is at times decidedly crude; it implies smashed hats and broken glass, and altogether it is no ballroom word. *Tight* is somewhat safer, but not too safe. *Edged*, on the other hand, is a dainty thing. *Edged* trips over the rug, flirts with the chaperone, is *risqué* and successfully so. *Piffed* is in some ways a similar term, but it usually lacks the debonair qualities of *edged*. Both words, however, may be used with practical impunity.

Soused is dangerous. It implies a sagging collar, a general mental and physical slump, very unsteady footwork, and even Cheyne-Stokes breathing. Its mirth is rather boisterous than witty. *Soused* is a term one never should use unless one is entirely sure of the facts. It is a good rule to limit its application to strangers, and when out of their company. *Brannigan*, nevertheless, is

different; perhaps because it is Celtic. It is a joyous, rollicking thing, always in good humor. All the world loves a *brannigan*—until the next morning, that is, when something valuable is almost inevitably discovered in an irreparable condition. [The Donneybrook complex.] *Three sheets to the wind* is nothing more or less than a *brannigan* of utterly reckless character, boiling along under full sail with rudder and tiller gone.

If you don't like a man, use *paralyzed*. *Paralyzed* is distinctly one of the last stages, often admitting the vulgar cabby and the police to the party. One should never, it appears, employ the designation *paralyzed* in endeavoring to describe the condition of oneself or one's friends. It isn't delicate. A better term for such an acme of fuddledom achieved by a member of one's immediate circle is an offhand, casual reference to it as a terrible *bender*. This gives latitude for at least some movement on the part of the subject. *Paralyzed* doesn't.

§4

Yet even here we are not at the end.

Take the word *lit*. *Lit* is similar to *edged*, still the designation *lit* is capable of covering the whole situation from merely *illuminated* to *blazing*. *Pie-eyed* also covers a good deal of ground, but no matter whether one connects it at either side with *edged* or *soused*, *pie-eyed* always carries a sense of bewilderment. There was a gentleman who gazed carefully into his wife's hair-brush and then swore softly to himself that he needed a shave [the contra-Narcissus complex]. That gentleman was *pie-eyed*.

Nor does even this conclude the list. If you don't like to think of a man as *soused* you can say he is *boiled* or *stewed* or *pickled* or *slopped*, and still be fairly accurate. Hand in hand with *paralyzed* goes *ossified*, which somehow or other is just about one stage worse. There are synonyms without number, synonyms without end. Each new synonym adds new confusion to the

problem of defining intoxication in terms that nobody can evade. For immediately you go to pin a man down to the facts, he straightway denies that he ever was drunk in his life. Occasionally, he admits, he has acquired a little *slant*—but that is all.

There was a certain rector who not long ago was requested to resign the guidance of his flock. He was accused of having been drunk. He denied it.

"It is true enough," he said, "that I have gone into public saloons and taken gin rickeys. After I had taken some the power of suggestion made me take others [self hypnosis]. When I felt a qualm in the stomach it at once suggested the gin rickey to my mind and the relief it would bring me. Then again I took some whiskey and possibly I took some beer. I did not become intoxicated, though I must confess that there were times when I was conscious of the liquor action upon my system."

Another euphemism! He was merely conscious of the liquor action upon his system. This, after all, must stand as an entirely reasonable explanation, for it is the universal testimony of the authorities who have studied the drink question at first hand that whereas it is easy enough to recognize intoxication in others it is inevitably difficult to recognize it in oneself.

This trouble undoubtedly arises from the fact that the symptoms of too much alcohol in one's own system usually arrive at inopportune and busy moments. Just as one finds oneself speaking with ease and freedom—getting one's voice in perfect control, as it were—an annoying friend requests one to lower one's tone. When one comes to the realization that quips and other forms of wit arise with happy readiness in one's brain someone suggests—with a meaning glance in one's direction—that it is evidently time the party broke up. This is vexing, diverting one's mind from the subject in hand. Perhaps one is singing at the moment, giving the tables pleasure and arousing the envy of the professionals in the corner. It destroys one's sense of perspective to

overhear one's friend telling the head-waiter he can take care of one all right.

Sometimes (to turn to more direct pronouns) you find that your powers of observation are quickened and that the world is a merry place in which the most common and ordinary people do things in an utterly joyous philosophy. You are hurt and pained when told that your innocent but hearty mirth is attracting notice. For these reasons your attentions are objective rather than introspective, and your symptoms inevitably escape your otherwise keen perception.

§5

Of course the question is a many-sided one, but research has demonstrated the existence of a few easy rules which may serve to guide the beginner in determining his own alcoholic status. They follow:

1. If your face begins to feel as if it didn't quite belong to you—you are.
2. If you are sure nobody hears your humming—you are.
3. If you are supremely confident of your ability to walk in a direct line—you are.
4. If a latent tendency to tears takes possession of you and you find yourself weeping over the fact that someone is kind enough to walk home with you—you are.
5. If you begin to realize that the waiter is a good fellow—you are.

What you are depends upon many, many things. You may possess any one or any combination of the various shadings of exhilaration which are socially substituted for the ancient and unkind word. If you are beginning to pronounce gin rickey as gin riggey you have already passed the *edge* and the *slant* stage and are fast accumulating a small *bun*; possibly you are even *half shot*. Still, because it is impossible to prepare a separate code of progress for each individual seeker after truth, we shall abruptly turn purists and in the cause of truth shall employ the good old dictionary label. You are *drunk*.

If nothing else, it seems so unsportsmanlike to deny it, to quibble over trivial synonyms.

You may be a *laughing* drunk or a

weeping drunk, as your temperament and potations influence you. You may be a *fighting* drunk or a *singing* drunk [the Orpheus complex]. If you have a tendency to ceremoniously bow an utter stranger through the swinging doors you are a *polite* drunk. If, however, you approach the stranger, tap him on the shoulder with your cane, strike an attitude and speak, saying, "You're a fat looking slob, old top!" then perchance you are *insulting* drunk. When a desire strikes an Anglo-Saxon to fall publicly on a friend's neck, informing him that he's the best fellow alive and begging him to partake of a drink with the cabman, that Anglo-Saxon is an *affectionate* drunk [the corpsbruder complex]. But if you evince a desire to lie down and seek repose, if you doze on your stoop with your key in the latch, then you rank as a *sonnolent* drunk [alcoholic narcosis; coma; collapse]. Still again, if you feel inclined to dispute the way with an approaching trolley car, if you insist on slapping the nearest policeman on the back of his unworthy head, your condition is that of an *I-don't-care* drunk. [Delusions of grandeur.] At all events, deny it or no, quibble as you may please, you are a *drunk*.

But why deny it? Why quibble? Why take refuge behind the protecting, effeminating skirts of words which evade the issue only by cloaking it in garments of poetic imagery?

§ 6

There is only one thing more. After having completed our labors of searching out, analyzing and subsequently synthesizing the facts here set down for the first time, it occurred to us that possibly certain other investigators might be fired with a desire to carry the researches still farther. Therefore, if any reader of this brief report has among his patients (or friends) anyone who may be inspired with an ambition to meet the demon rum (although, frankly, nobody drinks rum in this climate) and look him in the

eye, it will be doing the subject a service and saving him immeasurable time by inducing him to follow one simple rule. It has proved itself time and again. It has never failed. Here is how we have formulated it:

Start out in the evening with a few companions. Make up your mind irrevocably that you are going home early. Then, at judiciously spaced intervals, enunciate, loudly and with utter confidence, the following short affirmations:

1. "I am going straight home to bed."
2. "No—I can't stick with you fellows any longer."
3. "I really mustn't; I'm broke; I haven't got a come-back."
4. "Well, I'm supposed to be on the wagon."
5. "No, sir; not another one—I know my capacity."

Hold to this rule, recite these five incantations conscientiously and with faith, and your knowledge of the liquor problem will no longer be second hand.

Drink, as we said, is a sober matter. Ask anybody.

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A CONTRIBUTION TOWARD A LIST OF EUPHEMISMS FOR "DRUNK"

By James P. Ratcliffe, A. M., Ph. D. (Harvard), LL.D. (Oxon.)

A		D	
Aslant	Awash	Dipped	Doused
Atrophied	Awry-eyed	Drenched	Dripping
B		E	
Banjoed	Blazing	Edged	Embalmed
Barrelled	Boiled	Electrified	Enamored
Bashed	Boozed	Electrocuted	
Bazoosed	Broiled		
Bished	Buttered		
C		F	
Calcified	Coppered	Fiddled	Frazzled
Carburetted	Corked	Fixed	Fricasseeed
Choloroformed	Corkscrewed	Flooded	Fuddled
Confubsticated	Corned	Floored	Full
		Flummoxed	Fumed
		Flustered	

	G	Quagmired	Q
Galvanized	Greased		Queered
Gassed	Grogged		R
	H	Rattled	Rouged
Half-shot	Hooked	Refrigerated	
Ham-strung	Horned		S
Het		Schoonered	Snagged
	I	Scorched	Snooted
Illuminated	Inflated	Screwed	Soaked
	J	Sewed up	Soused
Jagged	Joyful	Shelled	Spangled
Jingled	Jugged	Shot	Splashed
	K	Siphoned	Squiffed
Keel-hauled	Knee-haltered	Slanted	Star-lit
Kegged		Slobbered	Stewed
	L	Slopped	Straffed
Larded	Liquored	Sloshed	Submerged
Left-hooked	Lit up	Sloughed	Swilled
Loaded	Lushed		T
Lubricated		Tambourined	Tight
	M	Tangled	Tingled
Malted	Muddled	Tangle-footed	Tipsy
Mellow	Mushed	Tanked	Tooted
	O	Tattooed	Torpedoed
Oiled	Ossified		U
Oozed	Oxydized	Unmanned	Upholstered
	P		V
Paralyzed	Pifflicated	Varnished	Verdigrised
Petrified	Piped		W
Phosphorescent	Plastered	Wet-nosed	Whooped
Pickled	Polluted	Wobbly	
Pie-eyed	Primed	Yeasty	Y
Piffed	Pruned	Zig-zagged	Yoked
Piffled			Z
			Zipped



A WOMAN can forgive God anything save a shiny nose.



CONVENTION—the protective tariff of society.



HER DAY OF DAYS

By Mary Adams Wakeman

AS she took her seat beside the Dean of Arts and Letters, she was faintly conscious of a sea of eyes upon the platform where she had just found place and in the crowding audience before her; kind eyes, admiring eyes, wondering eyes, cold or curious eyes.

"It is your day of days. I am glad."

They were sincere words, for her ear alone. She turned gratefully toward the speaker, the Dean. In his keen, benevolent face, bent smilingly toward her, she read his affectionate pride in her, his entire acceptance of her.

Not all the men of the faculty had been so willing to admit her upon their own plane as a rational being undisqualified by sex. With the thought, her eyes sought the slender, wiry figure of Dr. Cress, Dean of Medicine, three seats to the left of the President. How strange the sex prejudice of these brainy, effeminate men! Positive, unreasoning, blind, passionate! At first this Dr. Cress, the chairman of many committees, had wholly disregarded her presence as an occasional member, discouraging her contribution of word or act, looking around, beyond or over her, not seeing, not hearing. He had seemingly grudged her every gain. Only this morning, while both were on their way to this very assembly, he had stopped her upon the campus to say, "I congratulate you for what you have gained and are about to gain. I suppose I should say have earned or are about to earn. But I can do so only by forgetting that you are a woman. How much of your success is due to personality, and how much to work, I

can't say. I am suspicious of personality."

And she had replied, "What is personality but love of work fanned by love of life?"

He had shaken his head and hurried on. As she looked now at his bland, smooth forehead, his small, nervous eyes, his pale cheeks and thin chin and throat, she realized that it was that very joy of life which women brought with them into the world of academic men of which the latter were suspicious and afraid. And she, in surprising effrontery, had dared to use her mind even though possessing a home, husband and child.

Home, husband and child! She scanned the restless crowd. It was late June; fans fluttered, people moved about, and it was hard to locate anyone. At last she found them, husband and young son, well back, their smiling gaze seeking hers. She smiled in return, while some turned to see whom she greeted. Would they of the crowd never cease to wonder why she should not be down there with them; why she was doing—all these things? Would they of the crowd ever know it was not for herself, but for them, husband and son, that she labored and loved her work?

She looked about to discover among the faculty members the one man whose coöperation and respect she had really coveted. Against his presupposition that she was an ambitious woman working only for the sake of winning; under the prick of his view of her—felt from his manner—she had governed her will and had won with him. His passion was for fairness and imper-

sonality. He smiled now and nodded. It was worth something to win that recognizing smile from the most scholarly, the most discriminating, the most austere man of them all. His patrician gray head, his cool remoteness, his air of culture, it was good to find so near.

The exercises were about to begin. There was a subdued, conscious stir. The musicians of the orchestra, ranged below the half-screening curve of the stage, were sorting music, shifting seats, or softly tuning strings. At last the flushed German director arose, impressive and alert. A lifted baton, a quick, intent silence, and then first violin swung far out upon the sentimental strains of Elgar's "*Salut d'amour*." That first violin might easily expect a successful career. Artist, indeed! How ribbony sweet, how humanly vocal his tone! Humanly vocal! She was at once listening to the unconfessed, stifled voice from within. This was neither time nor place for confessing it. "Greeting to love!" Why, on an occasion like this? "*Salut d'amour*," a song of disillusionment, of love unutterable, unfulfilled, or passing. It sang too plainly of late spring, of waning youth. It carried her back to full days, it spoke of suppressed emotions and desires. It made all this assemblage suddenly unreal. It filled her throat; it all but touched her eyes. She would like to hurry, just now, to her bureau drawer; to fondle what she had concealed there. No one knew of those clandestine communings, there in her own room, late at night, where—there had been a number of these queer blind spells of late.

She must not give way. So many were watching. Perhaps if she but surrendered a little further to the exquisite rhythm of the singing violin, she could forget the images "*Salut d'amour*" had at first aroused. She must look serene before these encompassing eyes; must listen and look wise; must arouse herself. Was she, perhaps, more worn than she had known? This dread unreality was fairly stifling.

Ah, the sweet *pianissimo* expiration of that song of love! Love—expiration!

Someone was speaking—a very pompous man from Princeton—on a very pompous theme, the graduation address. How long it took him! If she could only slip away! Oh, to escape! The air was oppressive and sultry. . . . If they did but dream of the visions with which she could refresh herself; if they did but guess the secret obsession to which she might blissfully surrender body and soul! . . .

The President was talking now, congratulating and commanding the senior class; a brief speech full of understanding and point and vigor. Vaguely she acknowledged to herself its fine quality.

Then began the long platform procession of becapped-and-gowned seniors; representatives from each college, serious, wearing a dignity beyond their years, or slightly confused when loud clapping from the assembly seconded their acceptances of the coveted diplomas. It was a goodly sight. It brought to the dreaming consciousness of the Successful Woman a remote disturbing thrill.

Then the Masters. Then the Doctors, a small, scholarly band. How slow and thoughtful their strides! What they must hope of life! Certainly not the door to which they might find no key nor the veil through which they might not see. How their feet dragged on her! How wearisomely slow everyone was!

Honorary degrees. . . . She heard the President say the words. There was to be but one such degree granted . . . to her. She must remember that this was her day of days. Sad irony! Way down in the audience, it seemed very far away, she caught a mere glimpse of her husband's face, alight, straining to hear, selflessly proud; of her son's fine, lifted freshness of cheek and bright, interested eyes. Then in the moving sea of tired other faces the momentary contact was lost: Her throat filled.

What was the President, her admired friend, saying? Was he speaking of her?

"We of the University include in our faculty one of whom we are justly most proud, both because of her rare success as a leader, a scholar, a contributor to her chosen science and because of her qualities as a woman. For her leadership and scholarship we esteem her; for her qualities as a woman we love and honor her. Other states—their institutions and their causes—have already rendered her merited respect and recognition. You, with the whole country at large, know of her great effectiveness in a recent campaign of wide significance; an effectiveness of labor which has won for her a notable post at Washington, our national capital, in the Bureau of Education. Another year, we shall miss her presence here. Wherever she works, she wins—because of the love that is in her." . . .

"Because of the love that is in her." Over and over the phrase intoned itself within her brain, bringing blinding pain. Did they but know the secret of that love within her, how it was maintained, how it was daily renewed through strange outlet, seeking peace! Half distorted, a too-bright picture wavered before her.

There had been a little home back there in the past, where she had sung and danced, made pies and cakes, and looked for her Man's return at night—her strong, able, cheery Man. There her eager fingers had sewed—such wonderful things for One-to-come. There he and she had dreamed of a—different life, a very different life. There she had leaned to her mate and loved and lived. No one had called her "successful" then, but the day her little son lay in her arms had been her real day of days. There had been but one. Her strong man had been too ambitiously strong and willing. He had over-worked for them. He had broken in health—for them. It was his tragedy, not hers. And she? She had a half drawer full of pretty things—booties, jackets, dainty little gowns—work of

her own restless, caressing hands—and a wonderful doll, so like a human little one that, late at night, when others slept, she could dress and undress it, and hold it to her heart, and rock and croon, and play her own absorbing game, far from prying eyes, with sad indulgence of low laughter and dreams of yet one more real day of days.

If they knew, these academic men, these self-assured critical men, they would think her mad. Mad? At last an obsession was keeping a woman sane. This, this other thing, this Success, was the madness, the unnatural gallop of nerves and blood. Some strange weight seemed to be tangled with her feet. Was she drowsy? . . . She would fix her eyes upon the audience.

Someone moved. She saw her husband's face. It was discouraged, old. Her heart smote hard. He did not begrudge; her success was his; he gloried in her; but it was hard for him to await his own return. Everywhere he heard the summons to life but could not reply. It was hard for him, too hard. . . . She would resign; she would not go on; she would not dwarf his more deeply merited fame. She would repudiate her own success. It was his she wanted, not her own. The new work would absorb her; she would be drawn farther away from him—at such a cost. She would not go on. She raised her hand to her throat. There was a strange constriction there.

"Courage!" The Dean's sympathetic face flashed close upon her—how clean and soft and luminous his white hair! —and the Dean's firm, sustaining hand for one moment rested upon hers.

Then, the President was saying, "And now on behalf of the regents of the University, I have the privilege and honor—"

She knew she stood before him in her Doctor's gown and cap; she knew she recognized the granting of an honorary degree; she knew she bowed and smiled and passed decorously on; she knew that her husband's face was

working pitifully as he watched her cross the stage. She knew he was wan and tired and pressed for air to breathe. She saw that her son's eyes were wide with awe and fluttered respect. She caught his brave young smile. Should she go on to Washington, leaving them? One more year keep-going-on? He would be well at last, rest would make him well—if she went on. His future should yet see his promise fulfilled. He should be *strong*. Oh, for the quick coming of his day of days! Her strong, able man. She stood waiting at the door, his door, arms outstretched, his to command!

She dropped into her seat at last. She had begun to tremble, so absurdly. She actually shook. Her hands were very cold. Again the kindly touch of

the Dean's hand. All sights and sounds were far, far away.

She would go on to Washington, but she would take her doll and all the tiny, tiny clothes. She would keep alive the love with which to win—for him. Next time she saw Dr. Cress she would restate her definition, slightly altered. Personality was love of work *fed* by love of life. The food must last. He, the learned and the wise, wouldn't understand, and she would laugh, ever so lightly. . . . Oh, to laugh now, loudly, insanely!

What were the Herr Director and the orchestra playing now? Grieg's "To Spring." Yes—vanished spring, faded youth, the spill of roses, the breaking of human hearts. . . . Whose heart?



THE LITTLE BOAT

By Marguerite O. B. Wilkinson

MY lover built a little boat,
In it we floated far away
From all the shades of every night
And the slow dawns of every day;

Upon a silver song we sped
Over white laughter to a strand
Where all the queens of faery dance
And leprechauns have stamped the sand;

Then were we freed of mortal care
And feasted near the willow trees,
While many a naiad melody
Went lilting past us toward the seas;

Eager we were to follow down
That rapture to its resting place
In the great deep where laughter falls
Into an anthem's perfect grace.

But little boats put not to sea—
And led by love we found our way,
Back to the shades of every night
And the slow dawns of every day!

VENUS OR VALKYR?

By James Huneker

PAUL GODDARD found the ride between Nuremberg and Bayreuth disconcerting. The hot July breezes that blew into the first-class coupé of the train were almost breath-arresting; and Paul had left Stuttgart that morning in a savage mood. The slowness of the railway service irritated him, the faces of his traveling companions irritated him, and he had shocked an Englishman by remarking early in the afternoon:

"If the old engine doesn't run any faster than this we had better get out and walk, or—push."

The other simply peered at the speaker and then resumed Wolzogen's book on "Leading Motives."

Three Roumanian ladies laughed in oily Eastern accents. They understood English, and the sight of a human being, a strong young man, in a passion about such a little matter as European railroad punctuality struck them as ridiculous. So they laughed again and Paul finally joined in, for he was an American.

He had been rude, but he couldn't help it; besides, it looked as if they would reach Bayreuth too late for the opening performance, and his was the laughter of despair.

The youthful pilgrim journeying to Bayreuth was born in New York. He had studied music like most young people in his country, and had begun with that camel, that musical beast of all burdens, the piano. This he practiced at intervals most assiduously, because he really loved music; but college, lawn-tennis, golfing, dancing and motorboating had claims not easily put aside. Naturally the piano suffered

until Paul left college; then for want of something better to do he took lessons from Joseffy and edified that master by his spurts of industry. His club began to encroach on his attention, and again the piano was forgotten. Paul, whose parents were rich, was not a society butterfly, but his training, instincts and associations forced him to regard a good dinner, a good tailor and a racing motor-car as necessary to his existence. From his mother he inherited his love of music, and his father, dead many years, had bequeathed him a library; better still, a taste for reading.

An average cultivated American, intensely self-conscious, too self-conscious to show himself at his best, ashamed of his finer emotions, like most of his countrymen, and a trifle spoiled and shallow.

One day Edgar Saltus told Paul he should read Schopenhauer, and he at once ordered the two volumes of "The World as Will and Representation." It was not difficult reading, because he had been in Professor Bowne's class at college and enjoyed the cracking of metaphysical nuts. He began to get side glimpses of Wagner's philosophy, but despite the wit of the German Diogenes his pessimism repelled him. He could not agree with Saltus' ingenious defense of pessimism in his two early books, and he looked about for diversion elsewhere. Walter Pater's silken chords, velvety, verbal music, had seduced Paul from the astringencies of Herbert Spencer, and Chopin made moonlight for his soul on morbid nights.

Yet Paul, with his selfish, well-bred, easy life, had encountered no soul-

racking convulsions; he had never been in love, therefore he played the nocturnes of Chopin in a very unconvincing manner.

He always declared that Poe was bilious, and this remark gained for him the reputation of wit and scholar among his club associates.

The Calumet Club is not given to *velléités* of speech. . . .

II

THEN Paul Goddard fell into the clutches of Richard Wagner and swallowed much of him.

Chopin seemed tiny, exotic and feminine compared to the sirocco blasts of the Bayreuth master. Paul was not very critical, and like most Americans, he measured music by its immediate emotional result. The greater the assault upon the senses, the greater the music. The logic was unescapable.

Friedrich Nietzsche was the next milestone in Paul's mental journeyings. The attack on Wagner, the attack on the morals that made our state stable, the savage irony, sparkling wit and brilliant onslaught on all the idols, filled the mind of the young man with joy. He dearly loved a row, and though he recognized Nordau's borrowed polemical plumage, he liked him because of his cockiness.

So he devoured Nietzsche, reckless of his logical inferences, reckless of the feelings of his poor mother, a most devoted Episcopalian of the High Church variety. Paul always pained her with his sudden somersaults, his amazing change of attitude, and above all his heartless contempt for her idols, the Church and good society. Society sufficed her soul hunger, and Paul's renunciation of Mozart and Donizetti—she dearly loved "Lucia"—his sarcastic flouting of church-goers and his refusal to range himself, were additional weeds of woe in her mourning life.

There was Edith Vicker; but Paul was such a hopeless case and wouldn't see that a nice, pretty, rich, moderately intelligent, well-reared young woman

was slipping through his fingers. Mrs. Goddard often sighed that winter in her sumptuous uptown apartment.

Nietzsche opened up new intellectual vistas for Paul and he actually became serious. The notion of regarding one's own personality as a possible work of art to be labored upon and polished to perfection's point, set him thinking hard. What had he done with his life? What wasted opportunities! He deserted his club and began his piano-playing again, and when reproached by his friends for his fickleness he excused himself by quoting Nietzsche; a thinker, as well as a snake, must shed his skin once a year, else death. He also was ready with Emerson's phrase about fools being consistent, and felt altogether very fine, and superior to his fellow-beings. Nietzsche feeds the flame of one's vanity, and Paul was sure that he belonged to the quintessential band of elect souls that is making for the *Uebermensch*—the Superman!

He really was a nice, boyish lad, and he could never pass a pretty girl—whether a countess or a chamber-maid—without making soft eyes at her. Paul was popular; and so the Roumanian ladies laughed at him admiringly. Paul had left his mother in Paris, the heat was too trying for travel, and he was close to Bayreuth on this torrid summer day, one Sunday afternoon in July.

Yet another hour before him, he turned his critical attention to the laughing trio. One was a princess. She told Paul so, and spoke of the sultry diversions of Bucharest. The second was a fat singer, who startled the Englishman by inquiring if there wasn't a good *coloratura* part in "Parsifal." If there were, she intended asking Frau Cosima Wagner to let her sing it; but if there wasn't, she supposed she would have to be content with the Forest Bird; even Melba had been a *Waldvogel*, why couldn't she be one also?

Her sparkling eyes and mountain of flesh amused Paul exceedingly. He knew Heinrich Conried very well, and he told the singer that when "Parsifal"

was sung next season at the Metropolitan Opera House he would speak to the impresario and get her the part of Kundry. It was for a lark-like voice, such as the lady said she possessed, and full of Bellinian *floratura*.

As he gravely related these fables he was conscious of the penetrating gaze of the third woman. She was tall, frail-looking, with a dark skin, hair black and glossy, and she had the most melancholy eyes in the world. Paul returned her glance with discretion. His eyes were Irish blue-gray and full of the devil at times, and they could be very sympathetic and melting when he willed. The two young people examined each other with that calm regard that, as Schopenhauer declares, makes or mars the destiny of a new generation. But metaphysics and the biology of the sexes bothered not at all the youth and maiden. Paul admired the classic regularity of her nose and forehead and wondered why her face seemed familiar. Her mouth was large, irregular, perverse. It suggested Marie Bashkirtseff's, and it was just as yearning and dissatisfied. Despite their sadness, fun lurked in the corners of her eyes, and he knew that she enjoyed his harmless hoax.

Then they both burst out laughing, and the princess said in a surprised voice:

"Helena, why do you laugh with the young American gentleman?"

She also mentioned a family name that caused the New Yorker to stare. What, was this girl with the determined chin and brows the identical one who almost set Russia quarreling with another nation and upset the peace of Roumania? Yes, it was, and Paul no longer puzzled over her face. It had been common property of the photographers and newspaper illustrators a few years ago, and as he mentally indexed its features he almost said aloud that her curious beauty had never been even faintly reproduced.

His imagination was stirred; Roumania had always seemed so remote, and here was he, Paul Goddard, a plain

American citizen, face to face with the heroine of one of those mysterious Eastern intrigues in which kings, crowns, queens and ladies-in-waiting were all delightfully mixed up. So he chatted with Helena about Wagner and Degeneracy, and discovered that she was an admirer of Ludwig of Bavaria, Nietzsche, Guy de Maupassant, Poe, Schumann, Chopin, Marie Bashkirtseff and all the rest of the sick-brained people born during the sick-brained nineteenth century. She, too, had written a book, which was soon to appear. It was full of the *Weltschmerz* of Schopenhauer and the bold upspringing individualism of Nietzsche. She had odd theories of the Ring of the Nibelungs, and had read Browning's "Sordello." She told Paul that she found but one stumbling-block in Wagner. How, she asked gravely, with a slight blush—how could Parsifal become Lohengrin's father?

Paul said he didn't know. It must have occurred long after his experiences with Kundry and the Flower Girls, and perhaps it was a sort of—

"Oh, no, M. Goddard!" she quickly answered. "Not that. The swan died, you know; besides, Parsifal was always a Pure Fool." Paul suggested that it might have been another of the same name but of a different family. And then the conversation went to pieces, for the soprano called out:

"*Voilà!* Bayreuth, the Wagner theatre!" and they all craned their necks to catch the first glimpse of that mystic edifice built on the hill, the new musical Pantheon, the new St. Peter's of the Bewitched Ones.

And the Englishman continued to calmly read about the *Loki-motif* as the train slowly steamed into Bayreuth.

III

PAUL found comfortable lodgings in the Lisztstrasse and his new friends went to the Hotel Sonne. At half-past four he was up on the hill looking at the world, and as immaculately

dressed as if he stood in the bow window of the Calumet Club ogling Fifth avenue girls. He was only vaguely interested in the approaching performance, and his pulses did not quicken when Donner's motif told the gabbling, eager throng that the great Trilogy was about to unfold its fables of water, wood and wind. He took his seat unconcernedly, and then the house became black and from space welled up those elemental sounds, not merely music, but the sighing, droning swish of waters. The Rhine calmly, majestically stole over Paul's senses, he forgot New York, and when the curtains parted he was with the Rhine Daughters, with Alberich, and his heart seemed to stop beating. All sense of identity vanished at a wave of Wagner's magic wand, and not being a music critic, his ego was absorbed as by the shining mirror in the hand of a hypnotist. This, then, was Wagner, a Wagner who attacked simultaneously all the senses, vanquished the strongest brain, smothered, bruised and smashed it; wept, sang, surged, roared, sighed in it; searched and ravished your soul until it was put to flight, routed, vanquished and brought bleeding and captive to the feet of the master.

The eye was promise-crammed, the ears sealed with bliss, and Paul *felt* the wet of the waters. He panted as Alberich scaled the slimy steeps, and the curves, described by the three swimming mermaids, filled him with the joy of the dance.

The rape of the Rhinegold, the hoarse shout of laughter from Alberich's love-forsworn lips, and the terrified cries of the three watchers were to Paul as real as Wall Street.

Walhall didn't bore him, and he began at last to catch faint clues of the meaning of the mighty epic. He went to the underworld, and saw the snake, the ring and the tarnhelm; he heard the anvil chorus—so different from Verdi's!—he saw the giants quarreling over their booty, and the rainbow seemed to bridge the way to another, brighter world. As the Walhall

march died in Paul's ears he found himself in the open air, and he thought it all over as he slowly went with the crowd down the hill, that new Mount of Olives trod by the feet of musical martyrs. He had a program, but he was too confused, too overcome by the clangor of his brain particles to read it. He was not dreaming, nor yet was he awake; he was Wagnerized. The first attack is not always fatal, but it is always very severe, even to the point of pain. Paul Goddard had become a Wagnerite, and his Nietzsche and Schopenhauer skins melted from him as melts the snow in sunshine.

Striking through his many exalted moods was the consciousness of having recognized one of the Rhine Daughters. It was the contralto, an Eastern girl from Maine. Rue Towne was her odd name, and she had been once a pupil of a New England vocal school, but she had lived that down, and after the usual hard, interesting struggle abroad she had reached Bayreuth. Paul remembered her well. A blonde girl, eyes indescribably gray, with dark lashes, a face full of interesting accents, a rhythmic chin and cheekbones that told of resolution. Her figure was lovely, and Paul resolved to call on her the very next day.

He soon discovered Rue's address; Bayreuth is small and full of information for the curious. Paul on Monday morning went to the Alexanderstrasse, where she resided, only to find her at a rehearsal of "Die Walküre." He was rather put out, as he was accustomed to accomplish what he wanted without much exertion. He then be思ought him of Helena, the Roumanian beauty, and he warmed at the recollection of a glance he had received the afternoon previous. That, and the hand pressure, had been unmistakable. So he went to the Sonne Hotel and sent up his card. The three ladies were at breakfast. Would Mr. Goddard call in an hour?

Paul cursed his luck and walked to Wahnfried, wondering if he was to be bored during his stay. The reac-

tion from the exalted condition after "Rheingold" had set in. Paul was not a beer-drinker, so he could not avail himself of the consolations offered by Gambrinus, the Drowsy Deity of Germany. He had taken a pint of bad champagne and some tough chicken and slept badly. His cigar, too, was abominable, and he felt absolutely disillusioned as he paced the historic garden of Wahnfried. The true Wagnerite is always in heaven or hades. There is no middle distance in his picture of life and art. At Wagner's grave Paul felt a return of the thrill, but it passed away at the barking of a boarhound. He went slowly toward the hotel and was in such a perverse mood that he avoided it and turned into the Ludwigstrasse. Then he met someone.

A girl passed him, gave him a shy, half-startled glance; hesitated and spoke to him. It was Rue Towne.

"Mr. Goddard, I found your card a moment ago. I am very glad to see you. How did you like 'Rheingold'?"

Paul was standing in the street, the girl looking down into his eyes; he made a conventional answer, their hands touched, and they went down the street together.

That afternoon Paul received a pretty note from the Roumanian. She wrote of her sorrow at his not calling again, and asked him to join them during the first entr'acte of "Die Walküre." He tossed the note away, for his brain was filled with the vision of a girl in a straight-brimmed straw hat, a girl with a voice like a wooing clarinet and eyes that were dewy with desire. Paul was hard hit, and, as one nail drives out another, the blonde woman supplanted the brunette in his easily stirred imagination.

The first act of "Die Walküre" did not lay the fair ghost in his brain; he went on the esplanade and encountered the three Roumanians. Helena detached herself and came to him with that gracious gait, and proud lift of head and throat that gave her a touch of royalty. She reproached him with her magnetic gaze, and soon the pair

were strolling in the leafy lanes about the theatre.

Paul had never met a woman who mentally tantalized him as did Helena. She had a manner of half uttering a sentence, of putting a nuance into her question that interested while it irritated him. Artistic people are mutually attracted, and there was a savor in the personality of this distinguished girl that was infinitely enticing to his cultivated taste and at the same time slightly enigmatic. Without effort they glided into confidences, and the Sword motif sounding for the second act found them old friends. Youth is not the time for halting compromise.

Lilli Lehmann's art took Paul out of himself, and the beauty and vigor of the act stirred him again. But he could not recapture the first fine, careless rapture of the night before. To the nerves, virginal of Wagner, that thrill comes once only.

In the long intermission Paul found Helena and took her to the crowded café across the road to get something to eat and drink. It was a quarter after seven, and Wagner wears on the stomach. Even a poetical Roumanian girl has earthly appetites. So they drank champagne and ate pasties of goose liver, and confessions were many. Nothing establishes a strong bond of sympathy like the hunger and thirst of two healthy young humans. Paul seemed to have forgotten Rue and the splendor of her hair and complexion. He was rapidly losing his head in the subtle blandishments of the Eastern woman. He saw that she was a coquette, but her seriousness, her fierceness that broke through the shell of silky manners gave him a glimpse of a woman worth winning, and he was just gambler enough, American enough to dare. When he left her he carried away a look that was an unequivocal challenge.

Paul's brain was on fire during the Ride of the Valkyries, and he hardly realized that it was Hans Richter's masterly reading. The stage failed to interest him until he discovered Rue

in Valkyrean garb, and then he watched with his soul in his eyes. Her profile, so charming in its irregularity; her freedom of pose, her heroic action filled him with admiration. By the light from the stage he read her name, Fräulein Rue Towne, and she was the last in the list of the Valkyries. He watched with indifferent gaze the close of the act, and mentally voted the Paris version of the Magic Fire scene far superior to Bayreuth's.

He went toward the Hotel Sonne, as he had promised to sup with Helena, and wondered how he could see Rue that night. The American girl seemed something infinitely sweet, healthy, sun-swept in nature compared with her Slavic rival.

"By Jove," said Paul aloud, "it's a case of *rouge et noir*, and I'm in for it and no mistake." Paul was fond of polyphony.

IV

AFTER supper he suggested to Helena, Sammet's Garden. The artists always flocked there and it might prove interesting. Although a chaperon was a necessity, Helena persuaded the princess that she could go out just once in the American fashion. It would be so novel. Paul pleaded and, of course, won. The young people hardly spoke as they went down the dark street to the garden. The air was full of electricity. A touch, a glance and a storm would be precipitated. So they reached the garden and found a seat near enough the house to be tortured by Herr Sammett's crazy trombone. At the same table was a black-bearded little man dressed in white flannels.

"It is the Sär Peladan, I know him by his musk," said Helena discontentedly, and they changed their seats.

"What a decadent you are!" said Goddard laughingly.

"Yes, I believe sometimes I can think with my nose, my smelling sense is so keen. I can almost divine approaching enemies. Who is that girl

staring at you so hard, M. Goddard, a very pretty blonde, she looks like an American? No, not near the house —there, over there!" Heiena reminded Paul of a cat that lifts a threatening furry back when she scents a hostile dog.

"Oh, Lord!" he groaned. "It must be Rue. This settles me for good." It was Rue, and she had never looked lovelier. The slight bruise under her eyes betokened emotional exhaustion. She was dressed in white, and the simplicity of her gown and its charming fit made the German women plainer. Paul's heart knocked against his ribs as he returned her constrained bow. He saw that she had quietly and earnestly examined Helena, and as the eyes of the women met antagonism kindled. But the American girl was mistress of herself. She began to talk to the group of artists about her, while Helena sulked and glowered at Paul's too openly expressed admiration.

"You admire your own country-women, do you not, M. Goddard?" she asked, and the inflection in her voice was cruelly sarcastic. Before Paul could answer she touched his arm softly and said:

"If you can't look at me when I talk to you, why, you may take me home."

Paul at once begged her pardon, called for his reckoning and they prepared to leave the garden. He did not again salute Rue Towne, for she was talking earnestly to an ugly, old fat man with a gray beard and a Wagnerian forehead half a foot high. But out of the tail of his eye he saw that she was fully conscious of his departure. Scarlet spots came into her face, and as Paul walked down the garden steps he felt as if two eyes burned into his back. Then he did what other desperate men have done under similar circumstances. He made violent love to Helena, and it relieved the pain of his heart. But the girl was capricious, and only by dint of magnificent lying did he finally force her hand into his. They were now walking toward

the Hofgarten down a lonely, deserted street. The many bells of Bayreuth told them that it was a quarter-past eleven and the moon rode tenderly in the blue. It was a night made for soft vows and kisses, and as Paul walked he thought of Rue; Helena fell to dreaming of the prince in her native Roumania who had played the weakling to her strong woman's heart, and thus the pair reached the hotel and after a brief parley at its door said good night and parted.

O! blessed love, that can at least console two hearts glowing for the absent.

Paul awoke next morning with what the hard-headed Germans call a moral headache. He had a bad taste in his conscience, and he decided to call as soon as possible on Rue. It was nearly eleven before he got to her house. As she had no rehearsal for Siegfried, she received him. He thought that she was distant, but he talked fast and earnestly, and soon the ice began to thaw. Paul felt happy. Helena appealed to his decadent tastes, but Rue was as the perfume of the morning. He told her so, and explained at great length and with considerable ingenuity how he came in the company of a lone young woman. Her two chaperons—Paul fancied two sounded more imposing—had gone by mistake to the garden of the Sonne Hotel; that is why he left so soon with the lady, who was only a recent acquaintance.

He felt Rue's eyes on him as he wove this roundelay, and, feeling hot about the neck and a little fearful of his ability to keep up the strain much longer, he suddenly grasped the girl, crying out, and most sincerely:

"O! Rue, why do we waste time talking about a woman I never cared for and never expect to see again. I love you, I love you, my darling! Kiss me just once and tell me you care a little for me."

As he fell upon her she was taken off her guard, and the inevitable happened. She kissed Paul and he placed a big ring on her finger, and left the

house an hour later an engaged and also a much be-perjured man. He was happy until he thought of Helena.

That evening when "Siegfried" was finished Paul walked arm and arm with Rue down the hill to Sammet's. As they entered they brushed against three ladies, and Paul said aloud: "Oh, Lord!"

The next day Rue had to go to a rehearsal for the Rhine Daughters in "Die Götterdämmerung," and Paul was whistling the Spring Song from "Die Walküre" in his room when a knock at his door brought the news that a lady wished to see him. He wondered who the lady was, and, as the parlor of the house had been turned into a bedroom, he put on his hat and went into the hall to be confronted by Helena, shamefaced but resolute.

"Come out into the street," he begged, for in her implacable eyes he read signs of the approaching storm.

They silently descended to a lower étage. Then she turned and faced him:

"So you didn't come to me this morning," she said. Roumania excited was a stirring spectacle, nevertheless Paul wished that he was up the Hudson playing golf.

He endeavored to placate her. Helena, angered at her own loss of dignity in condescending to call on this man, reproached him bitterly, and it seemed to him that she was about to sing the picturesque songs of hate which Carmen Sylva has made known to us, when they reached the street. Then her rage vanished in a moment.

"You conceited man, and you really took me in solemn earnest! I fancied the Americans had a sense of humor. Pooh! You're not a man to love more than a moment, anyhow," and she went on her way laughing mockingly, leaving Paul shamefaced, angered, his self-love all bruised and his senses aroused, for Helena wrathful was more beautiful than Helena amiable.

He was so distressed in mind that he only sat through one act of "Die Götterdämmerung"; his Wagner mad-

ness seemed to have evaporated. He hovered around the back of the theatre, and caught a glimpse of Rue getting in a carriage with the same fat old German—her singing teacher, he fancied.

Although it was late, he called at her house. She had not yet arrived, the maid told him. He mooned about disconsolately until one o'clock, keeping at a safe distance from the Hotel Sonne. Then he wearily went to bed and dreamed that the Nornes were chasing him down Fifth avenue.

The next morning he called again on Rue. She sent down word that she was tired. He called again in the afternoon; she was not at home. In the evening, feeling as if he was going mad, he was told that she had gone out and would not be back until late. He hung around the house in a hungry-dog fashion, smiling bitterly at times and beginning to doubt even his own intentions. But no Rue.

He went home at last, and in a rage of love and jealousy he sat down and wrote to Rue this letter:

Rue, my Rue, darling, what is the matter? Have I offended you? Why did you not see me to-day, to-night? Oh, how lonely was the street, how sad my heart! I thought of Verlaine's "It rains in my heart as it rains in the town." Why don't you see me? You are mine; you swore it. My sweet girl, whose heart is as fragrant as new-mown hay! Darling, you must see me to-morrow—to-day—for I am writing to you in the early, early morning. You know that you promised to come to me next year in America. Only think, sweetheart, what joy then! The sky is alone with love. We walk slowly under few soft spring stars, and your hand is in mine, and that night, that night your heart will sob on my breast, my lovely woman, and your heart will faintly beat as we both slip over the hills to heaven. Rue, you will make me a poet yet. Say, I beg of you, the hour when I may see you.

Then Paul threw himself on the bed,

but not to sleep. It was daybreak, and the Teutonic chanticleer of the dawn had lusty lungs, and it was time for coffee. He dressed in feverish haste, went out of doors, secured a messenger and dispatched the letter. He walked up and down the Lisztstrasse for twenty minutes, and his emotion was so great at the sight of the boy returning, a letter in hand, that he retreated into the doorway and awaited the news. It was brief. He read this in Rue's firm handwriting:

Your friend Helena has told me all. Here is your ring.

There was no signature.

Then Paul did what most cowards do. He went to the other woman. The storm in his soul might be allayed, and he could have the pleasure of showing Rue that she was not necessary to him. Of course, the jealousy of Helena had spoiled his game; for he really had meant to be sincere with Rue, so he told himself in the inward, eloquent manner which paves hell with composite intentions. It was all clear to him. Helena loved him, else why did she tell Rue of his double dealing? It gave him a glowing feeling again in his distracted bosom, and as he walked into the Hotel Sonne he said between clutched teeth:

"Black wins!"

He was met by a polite portier, who told him that his friends had left on the early train for Vienna. But there was a letter!

Heartsick and with trembling hands he tore open the envelope.

Did you really think I loved an American when I can have a Roumanian? Better console your singer.

No signature.

"When does the next train leave for Paris?" asked Paul of the polite portier.

* * *

There is a rumor in society that Paul Goddard is engaged to Edith Vicker. He never goes to a Wagner music drama, and is passionately addicted to cabaret dancing.

Americans are very versatile.

THE POMEGRANATE

By Morris Gilbert

SOME things are really a bit too thick. Some practical jokes are all right and some aren't. I affirm that nobody but a rotter could have done what Major Denning did in revenge for the cabal we arranged against him at Mrs. Ostrander's dance at Sherry's. We got all the men to keep cutting in on him all evening by turns in every dance, so that the ghastly old bore didn't twitch more than five minutes the whole time. Ted Winston and I were the plotters of the giddy idea, and we became everlasting heroes to the flappers who knew the ponderousness and omnipresence of the Major's corner-stone feet.

At that the thing wouldn't be so bad if the Major didn't babble the story everywhere, chuckling and rippling in the depths of his dewlap like a bloated old ram. He buttocks round at teas and cotillions and dinners, and all he does is tell the story. Even our dowager aunts are laughing at us.

But the lowest thing about it is the way the Major garbles the tale. Ted and I believe he doesn't dare tell the truth for fear it would reflect upon himself. That I don't doubt for an instant. Here's the story and you can judge for yourself.

It was about a month ago—one of those nasty Saturday afternoons when there's too much drizzle to skate, and too much mud to ride, and too much snow to play golf—and you don't want to go to a matinée.

Ted Winston and I had planned to go out to Lakewood, but it was such dirty weather we gave up the idea. It must have been about half past four when the sun began to glimmer feebly

through, so we decided to take a taxi from the Club and while away a couple of hours before dressing. We told Jake—he's the chauffeur at the stand outside the Condor—to drive up through the Park and come down Broadway.

We made the tour and got down opposite the Winter Garden, when we decided on a cocktail. Jake swung the taxi over to the upside of the street and we had our drink. When we came out, Jake was flirting with the engine, so we got in the taxi and waited. Hardly were we seated when, as I live, the door opened and in stepped the most ravishing, delirious bit of womankind I've ever seen! A perfect pomegranate! About the size of a pony, dark, wonderful color, dressed like a mannequin—oh, beyond words.

Ted and I were stuftified. We couldn't articulate. Then, by gad, she motioned us apart, and sat down between us! There we sat, all three, she as cool and self-possessed as any diving Venus, Ted and I in a state of coma!

I've never seen Ted Winston so taken aback. But Ted, you know, is sporting, through and through, and nothing can feaze him long. So finally he burbled out:

"How d'ye do?"

"How do you do," replied the pomegranate. Her voice was soft and smooth and rippling like old claret. That's all she said—just How y'ye do, as cool as a sphynx. Ted tried again.

"You know," he said, "this—this is an unexpected pleasure."

"Oh, really," said the pomegranate, a bit bored and not at all disturbed.

That's all she said. She was so jolly self-possessed she might have owned the taxi. Just then Jake got through dickering with the carburetor and climbed into his seat, pulling on his gloves. You should have seen his face when he turned round to ask where to.

That seemed to be the bally question. Where to? I looked at Ted and Ted looked at me, across the seraphic profile. We were speechless.

"You tell him," said Ted finally, gibbering at me. That was low-down of Ted certainly. I didn't tell him. How could I?

Then the pomegranate's voice, clear and tinkling, relieved the stupid situation.

"To the Maddington, please," she said simply, and resolved into her state of personified poise. I could tell by the way Jake jammed the clutch in that he was beside himself. I don't blame him. Ted and I were.

Then the pomegranate smiled at me. One of those slow, personal, you-dear-boy smiles that clog traffic just in front of your sixth vertebra. I rather believe I blotted like a sheep in response. And just behind that tiny ear with the tendrils of satin hair over it, I spotted Ted's face. Of all ludicrous, Peter Newell persons, Ted looked the image then. I had to think about the war to keep from clacking with laughter. The nervous strain, of course, was frightful—that Chopin nocturne of a smile, and behind it Ted's eyes. I could almost hear them popping like corks. Then the pomegranate spoke again.

"You really mustn't be shy with me," she said.

That didn't help matters any, but rather plunged us into more excruciating stupor. I was deliberately collapsing under the play of those two violet rays, when she turned upon Ted. But Ted, the wily, clever devil, was collecting himself. He rather *is* game, you know—I always admire his wonderful assurance. When the pomegranate looked at Ted, Ted regularly beamed back, and burst forth like a steam caliope.

"I say," he cried, "this is nice, isn't it? This is a bit of all right. So good of you to come—so clever of you to suggest the Maddington—a little overwhelming at first, but you understand, don't you? So good of you—yes—yes—" said Ted, all at once, like a cinema running mad. Then he stopped short, looked rather vacant, and suddenly pounced upon me.

"Let me present Mr. Amring," he cried.

"Mr. Amring?" inquired the pomegranate pleasantly.

"Right-o," said Ted.

"Thanks awfully," said I.

By this time we had come to the Maddington and Jake slung the door open. Out we stepped and in a great bustle managed to find ourselves within the hotel doors.

"Don't you think the tea-room a little crowded and close, Mr. Amring?" breathed the pomegranate as we stood rather at a dead center in the lobby.

"I dare say," I acquiesced numbly, and Ted gazed at me with pain, pity, forbearance, and scorn all simply stencilled on his face.

"What do you say to tea in a private tea-room?" he burst out, and I, dolt that I was, applauded his magnificent intuition. Winston is regularly up to everything, I must say.

"Why, yes, we can talk more comfortably there," agreed the pomegranate and swept Ted a glance that crowned him like a halo. I had to admit Ted's supremacy from that moment on.

"Rather a coryphée, what ho?" whispered Ted as we followed the pomegranate through the tea-room, through the dining-room into a little alcove beyond. We were scarcely seated when there burst the original of a series of cataclysms.

"I presume," said the pomegranate as soon as we had agreed we could go a little tea and the waiter had left the room, "I presume that since this is Mr. Amring" (here she indicated me) "that you" (pointing to Ted) "are Major Denning!"

At that moment I think my mind for

once moved quicker than Ted's. Ted apparently didn't appreciate the delicacy of the situation. He chuckled like a fat-head.

"Rather not," said Ted complacently, "I'm Winston."

What does Kipling or Byron say about a "troubled sea in wrath"? Something very pertinent and emotional, you remember. As I think back now, somewhat the same effect fell upon the party at those words. The pomegranate rose, quick, tense, eyes wide, assuming a posture which I suppose is called shrinking.

"You are not Major Denning?" queried the pomegranate. Then Ted saw that something was wrong. He rose, too, and began manœuvres.

"Wh-why no, I'm Ted Winston, as I told—"

"This is outrageous!" cried the pomegranate. But that term didn't apply to her at that moment. A certain quince-like acridity seemed to have come upon the lady. "This is hideous! Who are you—I don't know you. Why are you here?"

In that agonizing moment I, too, staggered to my feet. It was extremely melodramatic and absurd—and then I noticed the pomegranate's eyes extending and extending as if with some new supposed realization, and she burst out—

"Oh—now I know! It is a plot! This is not New York, this is Turkey! Seducer!"

She turned full upon Ted and smothered him under a volley of recriminations. It didn't seem possible. It was altogether too horrid to be real. And there was Ted withering under her bombardment, his bally Adam's-apple working like a silent knight motor, and looking perfectly absurd and simple—and I suppose I must have looked just as tuckered, too.

Just as the pomegranate swung into the top of her stride—in shuffled the waiter, armed with Orange Pekoe and hot buttered muffins and sugar and cream! It was like John Drew appearing suddenly in a Wilson Mizner

third act. The pomegranate turned to him wildly.

"Oh, help me, help me!" she cried. "Take me away from here! Send for Major Denning."

That gave Ted Winston one of those inspirations of his. He slammed his hand down hard on the table as they do in the dramas, and brought everybody to a standstill. Ted was really rather commanding at that moment. He pointed to the table before he said anything, and the waiter put the tray down. Then Ted turned to the pomegranate. His voice was cracking a little as he spoke, but still it was certainly impressive—very.

"Madam," he said, "we don't know who you are or how you got here. Don't accuse us of—of all sorts of impossible things. If Major Denning can straighten out this matter, the simplest thing to do is to send for the Major, who happens to be a friend of ours."

He turned to the waiter.

"Telephone the Condor Club," he went on, "and ask Major Denning to come here at once. Tell him Ted Winston requests it."

The waiter, rather bewildered, fluttered out.

"Now," said Ted, and by gad, I admired him for his poise, "if you will please sit down and pour the tea, we'll wait for the Major."

I shan't describe that ghastly twenty minutes. It was beyond words. At the end of that time the blatant old bore appeared. He rushed up to the pomegranate and babbled:

"Oh, my dear Miss Van Ness, how good of you to call me!" He shook hands with all of us in his flabby way in turn. Immediately the whole story came out. Seduction, privy conspiracy, and rebellion! How the pomegranate did talk—and it was all so beastly plausible. We felt like low criminals. When Miss Van Ness—the erstwhile pomegranate—finished, the Major drew himself up, his dewlaps quivering. The old bore was in a new role as the squire of dames.

"Gentlemen," he thundered. It

sounded as if he had called us red Indians. "What is this?" he said. "What do I see—two honorable young men, my acquaintances, I may say friends, are accused before my eyes of criminal action. It is unbelievable!"

Gad! How we wilted. Events were passing too quickly for us to gather our thoughts.

"Miss Van Ness," continued the Major, quite transfigured by self-imposed righteousness, "is my colleague in the Society for Founding Technical Libraries among the Poles. She and I had an appointment to discuss propaganda this afternoon. I find her the insulted prey of two shameless licentious rakes! It is hideous."

It sounded like a speech. Ted and I stood motionless before them like idiots. On went the phillipic, punctuated by sobs from the pomegranate, who had now succumbed to self-pity. The climax was long in coming.

"Now," said the Major, "Miss Van Ness has suffered no evil at your hands, thanks to my appearance. (He forgot that we sent for him.) Perhaps she can put away her sorrow and shame eventually. In the meantime, it is only fitting that you should make some contribution to her cause, which would in some way alleviate the shame of this occasion."

Laboriously Ted and I scrawled "Treasurer to the Society for Founding Technical Libraries among the Poles," and tore leaves from our cheque books. The pomegranate had lately stopped weeping. She folded the cheques carefully.

"Thank you, gentlemen," said the pomegranate. "Good day."

Then she slipped a confiding hand on the Major's bloated arm and said: "Come on, dearie."

Triumphantly the two flaunted out of the room. The Major appeared to wear a bacchic leer as he passed the door.

* * *

For a week Ted and I avoided each other. Then, one afternoon, I was sunk disconsolately in a chair in the smoking-room at the Condor when Ted came and sat down beside me.

"Jack," said he, "I've been brooding a lot!"

"Yes, Ted," said I, "so have I."

"Jack," said Ted, "there's a question I want to ask you. Why didn't Miss Van Ness see I wasn't the Major when she got in the taxi?"

"Yes," said I, "I've thought of that."

"She's not in the Social Register, Jack," said Ted.

"I know it," I answered; "and Ted, do charity workers say 'Come on, dearie,' to men like the Major?"

Both of us were silent, brooding, for some moments. Then Ted drew closer to me and whispered:

"Jack, upstairs in the Major's bedroom—the door was open when I passed this afternoon—is a picture frame, and in the frame, what do you think there is?"

"Two cheques for a thousand each, made out to the Treasurer for the Society for Founding Technical Libraries among the Poles," I answered.

"Right-o," said Ted.



A WOMAN, after she has been visited by a hairdresser and a manicure, and has clothed herself in an imported gown, is the most beautiful thing God ever made.



WICKED women are popular because with them a man can be natural.

THE COLOR OF CAIRO

By Achmed Abdullah

SHE is Cairo, the Victorious, as the Arabs call her, and in great, poignant beauty she towers above the sand-banks and the silt-isles of the Nile like a Saracene watch-turret set among fellah hovels.

She is not steeped in sensuality like Budapest; soaked in the mutton grease of respectability and the small-beer of borough politics like London; bedecked with off-color diamonds and open sewer-pipes like New York; overlaid with stodgy, obscene Sezession stucco like Berlin. Cairo, among all the cities of the earth, resembles Paris in this, that she has a soul which, unbartered, untainted, has risen triumphantly above the dirt and clamor and misfortunes of the swinging centuries; a soul which is as the soul of the Soofi who knows neither the good nor the bad, having done both and finding not much to differentiate the one from the other. For Cairo has loved mightily and sinned mightily. Cairo, which has wallowed in blood and tears and which has outlaughed the Olympians, stands to-day still untouched by either tears or laughter . . . serene, calm, thoroughly alive; most modern and very ancient; of the East Eastern and of the West Western . . . but with a fine, white cadence in her voice, a sweet nuance in her aroma which are both essentially her own.

You feel this if indeed you are so unconscious of sophistication as to be able to discover the unconsciousness of beauty in natural and in man-made things. You feel it long before you have seen the white houses of Cairo lifting up their flat heads above the reeking vapors of Kafr al-Zayyat. You

feel it as you steam far up beyond Wardan, where (if you are familiar with the tongue, the abuse, and the poetry of Shem) you insult the blue-robed, hatchet-faced villagers by shouting lustily "*Haykal! Ya ibn Haykal!*" —*Haykal!* Oh sons of Haykal! —in memory of Haykal the poet. For, many centuries ago . . . long before the men of Egypt took to Scots whiskey made in Greece and peg-top trousers made in Chicago, and the women of Egypt to feminism and Poiret gowns . . . Haykal enjoyed the favors of the fair ladies of Wardan, and then described their intimate charms in a sarcastic poem which he nailed to the door of the village mosque . . . returning immediately afterwards to his native town of Stamboul.

Coming from the North, from blue Naples and steel-grey Athens, the very sky is new. There are orange and cerise lights in it, barred with clouds of purple and maroon chiffon which add something to one's knowledge of sunsets and which would guarantee the success of any Belasco production. It takes the average Westerner at least three visits to the heights of the Mokattam (whence the best view of the sunset is obtained) to make him realize that the colors are real and not the result of too much Turkish absinthe imbibed at the St. James's Grill Room in the Sharia el-Maghriby. Yes . . . Kismet, the Suez Canal and the English have been so unkind as to put a St. James's Grill Room, a place where "unclean" food and forbidden spirits can be obtained, in the very street which takes its name from the Maghribys, those Moslim-Presbyterian rough-

necks from Tunis and Tripoli who claim that even tobacco and onions are forbidden the true believer. Why not? There is a Stamboul Café somewhere in the neighborhood of Madison Square, and there is O'Mulcahy's New England Restaurant in Victoria, B.C. . . . down the Admiralty Road a-ways.

As to the Turkish absinthe: that also is true. For, though the average Moslim abstains from pork and liquor as strictly as in the days of the first Caliphs, there exists a certain class of Turks who are popularly described as

Turco fino,
Mangia porco è beve vino.

But even these free-thinking Moslim make up for their dietary and religious backslidings when Ramazan, the Blessed Month of fasting and prayer, befalls the world of Islam and makes all the Moslim of Cairo bilious and unamiable, all the English nervous and watchful, all the Greeks (indeed, you cannot blame them, because Allah made them Greeks) very, very scared. For Ramazan, when, during a whole month, for sixteen hours each day, the true believers are forbidden to eat, smoke, drink, and even to swallow their saliva, is apt to steep the sunny, smiling souls of the Cairene into abysmal gloom. Their voices, never exactly *bel canto*, rise to a shrill, rasping octave. Their temper becomes murderous, their abuse hotter than that of the Punjaubi, and their manners worse than those of Central Asia.

And how can it be otherwise? Consider:

For a whole month, every morning, the gun warns all believers half an hour after midnight that it is time, high time, to prepare for the morning meal, the *Sahur*. It is an unearthly hour of the day to eat cold, stewed goat flavored with honey and garlic, greasy Moslim bread, and leathery apricot paste, and to drink muddy coffee scented with musk and attar of rose. Still . . . they eat all they can. For they know that there will be no more food for them until sunset. Comes the *Salam*,

the Morning Prayer, a rather elaborate affair; perhaps one pipeful of blackish Jabali tobacco, which tastes and smells distressingly of creosote mixed with asafoetida; and, at half past two A.M., the second gun fires the *Imak*—the order to abstain from food and water and tobacco until further notice. And they *do* abstain. They abstain from water even during the afternoons, when the furnace-heat of the outer desert blows over the city. They work, in the heat, without food, without drink, until the *Maghrin*, the sunset hour, approaches. Then once more the second gun sounds from the Abbasiyah Palace, that ugly red pile which Abbas Hilmî built for himself outside the walls of Cairo; and at the same moment the populace of Cairo breaks into loud, relieved shouts of "*Al Fitar! Al Fitar!*"—Fast-breaking! Fast-breaking!

Can you thus blame the Cairene if they look with hatred and envy on the Christians and the Jews who can eat and smoke and drink and swallow their saliva the livelong day? Can you blame them if, once in a while, they lose their temper altogether and administer a dose of chastisement to Greek, Armenian or Copt?

"Ho, seller of pig's tripe! Ho, bath-servant! Ho, illegitimate and unbeautiful child of Satan and a she-jackal! Ho, brother of a naughty sister! Thou didst step on my foot! And now . . . by Allah and by Allah . . . thou shalt eat stick!"

Thus the shout . . . and then the "stick-eating," which is apt to be rather painful if the stick happens to be a *Nabbut*, an ashen stave, six feet long and thick as a man's wrist. It is immaterial that the Greek, the Armenian, or the Copt was most likely far too scared to step on anybody's toes. The main thing is that he ate . . . that he walked about the Esbekiyeh Gardens, sipping his lemonade, smoking his cigarette, eating his dates, and swallowing his saliva. So stick he will and must eat . . . and the English-drilled policeman is wise enough to turn his back.

Of course these little street scenes

occur mostly in some crowded bazaar unfrequented by the tourist, such as the El-Muaiyad, where English and French are not spoken, or perhaps in the Suk-el-Fahhamin, behind the el-Ghuri, most charming of mosques. Only the artist of the West, searching for local color and yellow Bafra tobacco, finds his way to the last-named Suk. There he is received by-craftsmen as a fellow-craftsman. There the artist of Egypt sells his wares, and brother speaks to brother negligent of the barrier of faith, language, or manner of eating. So far this Suk has not been discovered by the tourist. Nor has the el-Ghuri mosque been found. Which is a good and just thing. For this mosque was built, many years ago, by the Circassian Mameluke Sultan el-Ghuri, and it is reported that he had no love for the Franks, the foreigners of the West.

Again the "stick-eating" scene may occur in the Gamaliyah, the Quarter of the Camel-Drivers. Formerly it was the special gathering place of Red Sea traders. But to-day the traders from all the East can be found there, spitting and shouting and fighting and giving each other the full-flavored abuse of nearby Asia. In that quarter one must be an Admirable Crichton if one wants to understand the drifting talk. Even Russians from Tiflis, most wonderful of polyglots, have been known to be at loss there once in a while for a word, an answer. For all the world brings to Gamaliyah its manners, its tobacco, and its language. There you can hear Armenian, most uncouth of languages; guttural bastard Greek from the Isles, uglier even than that of Athens; Turkish as limpid as a brook; lisping Georgian, explosive Fukhtu, virile Arabic, soft-gliding, feline Persian. And once in a while comes a clipped Cockney phrase or a few words of metallic Apache slang spoken by men, blue-eyed and straw-haired, perhaps, but dressed in *burnous* and *kufiyah*. . . . Europeans, perhaps deserters or escaped convicts who have "gone native." Do not speak to them. They will borrow your money and your tobacco, weep on

your shoulder, and steal your watch.

Occasionally even the main streets of Cairo may witness a Ramazan outbreak of Moslim temper. But very seldom. They are too well policed, altogether too Europeanized. Go down either of the two main streets and observe both shops and people. In half an hour's stroll you can buy there anything made in Paris and sold in London, anything copied in Elberfeld-Barmen and recopied in Yokohama, anything baked in Naples, grown in Spain, or mixed in Coney Island and New Orleans. Also you can buy there *anybody* born and bred in Athens, Palermo, Warsaw, and Vienna. But if, being far from home, you do buy any of the latter variety, be careful where you take her to dinner. Shepheard's is but a branch office of Simpson's on the Strand, and its restaurant will close its doors to you, though you be a Pasha with fifteen horse-tails. Go to Santi's in the Esbekiyeh Gardens. The smiling Italian headwaiter will understand and serve you well. For once he lived in Port Said. Or, if Santi's is crowded, go to the Eldorado in the Rue Esbekiyeh, and watch the "native" dancing girls . . . and do not be surprised if the dancing girls also talk to you in the tongues of the cities afore-mentioned, Athens, Palermo, Warsaw, or Vienna. For the leaf of the henna-plant, powdered kohl, and attar of geranium can orientalize even the blondest hair, the bluest eyes, the whitest skin.

And yet, the two streets are *not* of the West.

It is true that the Cairene will affect the manners and speech and trousers of Europe when a salvo of artillery from the Citadel has announced the end of the Lenten woes, when the Ramazan madness has given way to *Bayram*, the Lesser Festival, when once more he is permitted to eat and drink and swallow his saliva as befits an Egyptian of leisure and the many virtues, when once more he walks about town, smiling, debonair, laughing heartily at the broad pleasantries of Kara Gyuz, the local Punch and Judy. It is true that then

the Cairene will speak again of the Rue Nahassim, instead of calling it the *Suk-en-Nahassim*. He will pass by the mosque *el-Hakim*, which was built by the third Caliph of the Fatimites, the sainted founder of the Druze mysteries, with an atheistic shrug and a careless jest about the white-bearded, green-turbaned Moslim doctors who are practicing inside of *Al-Mantik* and *Ma'anî Bayan* . . . of logic and rhetoric as interpreted by the Koranic commentaries. Nor will he be impressed by the Azhar and Hasanayn mosques, those very ugly piles which are so famed throughout Islam for their odor of sanctity.

No. Once more he imagines himself to be an Occidental, a man of the outer world. He will proceed down the fine, broad street which he will call the Boulevard *Mehmet Ali*, and when he speaks of the prolongation of the famous old *Muski* as the Rue *Nouvelle* it will not strike him as either pathetic or humorous that this Rue *Nouvelle*, this distressingly new street, leads straight up to the ancient tombs of the Caliphs.

And yet, though French and English drop from the lips of the Cairene with equal, charming fluency, he is not of the West. Nor are the two main streets of Cairo of the West . . . in spite of all their European trappings . . . for which be thanks to Allah, Opener of the Locks of Hearts with His Name, and to the forty-seven true Saints!

Stop for ten minutes under the colonnades of the Street *el-Birket*, look toward the *Esbekiyeh* Square, and you will understand.

There are first of all the many varieties of sounds. For, in the East, everyone talks, and in the East everyone talks in extremes, either in a gloomy whisper or in a raucous scream. The very voices of horse and donkey and camel seem to be pitched in a soprano key. Or, if by any chance a party of English soldiers and French shopkeepers, of Austrian drummers and American tourists make you forget for a moment that the Orient is throbbing about you, you will be jerked back into the reality of

things when, high above the hubbub, rises the melodious voice of the Muezzin chanting "Hie ye to devotion! Hie ye to salvation!" . . . and the immediate answering mutter all about you . . . from balcony and shop, from coffee-house and from the gutter itself. . . . "Hicre I am at Thy call, O Allah! Here I am at Thy call!"

But watch. Watch again. For all the world is passing beneath the colonnades.

There are solemn, impassive-looking Turks, gently ambling past on gaily caparisoned mules; grinning negroes from the farthest Soudan who could tell grim-clanking tales of the days when the madness of the Mahdi swept over the land; straight-backed gipsies, walking royally, arrogantly; melancholy fellahs in scanty, blue caftans; cunning-faced Levantines, odiously handsome; green-turbaned, wide-stepping Shreefs, the aristocrats of Islam, and desert Bedawin with cotton in their flaring nostrils so as not to smell the unclean abominations of the city; water-carriers, tawdry, anxious-eyed Greeks, Albanians bristling with impudence and weapons, and all the other *dramatis persona* of the Arabian Nights and the Russian Ballet. There are gorgeously arrayed Jewesses from Morocco and Algiers, some more beautiful than the moon on the fourteenth day, others more grotesque than anything in Doré's illustrations of the *Contes Drolatiques*. And here and there in the crowd you see an Egyptian lady, totally concealed under the inevitable *yashmak* and the voluminous *haik*. They are in white, the ladies of Egypt; and that is good. For thus they give a restful relief to the blaze of colors all about them.

You must preserve them . . . those colors . . . and so you rush off to the Rue *Nouvelle* to buy paper and brushes and paint-tubes. You call for lilac, vermillion, bistre, emerald green, royal purple, and red which is redder than all the reds you ever dreamt of.

And after you bought all the paint-tubes in the shop, you rush back once more to the street *el-Birket*. You must

have another look. For you are sure that you have the colors all wrong. So you take a short cut . . . which is a mistake. For it leads you through the Suk-es-Saigh, the bazaar of the goldsmiths and the jewellers . . . and there you dally for an hour or two, gaping, exclaiming, trying not to buy . . . since all the stones of all Asia are in that narrow, crooked, evil-smelling bazaar.

There are rubies from Burmah, jasper from the Punjaub, turquoises from Thibet, star-sapphires and alexandrites from Ceylon, white crystal from Malwa, onyx from Persia, amethysts from Tartary, green jade and white jade from Amoy, garnets from Bundelound, red corals from Socotra, chalcedony from Syria, malachite from Kafiristan, pearls from Ramesvaram, lapis lazuli from Jaffra, diamonds from Poonah, black aghate from Dynbhulpore. There are also Greeks who sell green, faceted glass from Belgium set in silver rings. And so you buy one . . . for the ring is very pretty, and costs only ten pounds sterling . . . and . . . well . . . the Greek is a Greek and a master-salesman.

By the time you have returned to the colonnades everything has changed again. It has become another world, the world of early night steeped in smoky purple and dull orange. There are acrobats, Italian organ-grinders, sugar-cane venders, others who sell fly-fans, ebony sticks and rugs, bootblacks, newspaper boys, Copts in silk caftans with white shawls plaited about low turbans, Syrian Levantines . . . who are worse than the Greek Levantines. And it is said that the Greek Levantines are worse than the Armenians who, in their turn, are worse than snakes. There are Hindu fakirs, red-coated English soldiers who give you a brother's smile and wink; and, betwixt and between, broad and unashamed, are the dregs of the women of Orient and Occident.

There is also one small, fat, brown child, a girl-child, who laughs at you and calls you a very bad name. And,

if you understand the Arabic, you cuff the small girl-child very gently and you give to her the equivalent of three cents in tiny copper coins. But you do not tell her that she is a pretty, dear wee thing. For that would bring evil on her in spite of the blue beads which she wears around her throat for protection, and perhaps the mother is nearby, carefully watching and listening . . . and there is also the possibility that the father across the street in the coffee-house may be a six-foot Arnaut with starched petticoat and murderous antecedents.

And so, because after the little, brown child . . . which is all Cairo, which is all the East . . . you are tired of the tangle and crush of the Levantines elbowing each other in the slime and reek of the street, you drift away. Do not let the guide persuade you to see the night life of Cairo. You will only see the degradation of the Western world you left behind in your own country. Nor visit the *tekkés*, the monasteries, of Mevleyi or Rufai, or turning or howling dervishes. Remember: even at home there are Holy Rollers and Shakers and various camp-meetings. And religious hysteria, imbecility, and epileptic madness are the same under the Cross as under the Crescent. If you are conversant with the language and the faith of Islam you can spend the rest of the evening at some *Takiyah*, some dervish oratory, perhaps at the Gulshani, near the Muayad Mosque. But the chances are that the Holy Men will bore you with their venomous, religious disputes about the various merits and demerits of the Koranic schools of Abu Hanifah and Al-Shafe'i . . . chiefly when some *Madarri*, some professor, proves his point by quoting about ten chapters from the *Marah al-Falah*, and then reinforces his opinion by five hundred pages from the *Sharh Ayni*.

Drift rather. Follow the feet of your soul, as the Afghans say. Perhaps Providence will be kind to you. Perhaps Fate will conduct you to the Citadel where you will sit yourself upon a

high wall near the mosque of Mohammed Ali and watch the lights of Cairo dying in the purple-blue mist like candles in the meeting of winds. For the sunset, golden and gorgeous, is short, and the dark comes in rapidly, until the whole of Cairo is a flat mass of slate-grey, eddying smoke, and only the minarets of the Azhar mosque stand out like ghostly sentinels. Which is right and just. For Azhar is the Grand Collegiate Mosque of all Islam, celebrated wherever men praise and bless the name of the Prophet. And it was built by one Jahaur el-Kaid, the freed slave of a Barbary trader, because in a dream the Archangel Gabriel had ordered him to "build a high and shining place whence the light of faith, truth, and science should send forth its golden rays over Al-Islam."

But turn your back on mosque and minaret, on tekke and bazaar, and look over the Desert which stretches beyond the walls of the Citadel like a sea of dull-yellow loam with billows of chalk rock. Here, within a mile of the violent heart of Cairo, all is desolate. Bricks and masonry are crumbling into gangrened decay, the huts are empty, the paths untrodden . . . save by an occasional dromedary which looks at you with that disdainful sneer which is its treasured birthright. The Wild is at your feet. There lie the thousand tombstones in all their ghastly whiteness, and, beyond them, the square, dark shapes of the Mameluke Sultans' towers rise and give you the message of the past, the message of the dead . . . when Egypt was an arbiter in the council of nations, when Islam ruled the world, when Cairo was the asylum of learning and splendor. And it is also possible . . . if indeed your ears are open to the gossip of bazaar and coffee-house, to the panicky mutterings of Greek and Armenian, and to the subterranean rumblings of Cairo's intriguing secret societies, the *Rakaiz Al-Utab* which conceal their real objects and intentions under the guise of merchants' guilds . . . it is then possible that the frowning forms of the Mameluke tow-

ers may bring to you the message of the future, faint but persistent rumors of a dervish lodge far to the West, where the grandmaster of the Sennus-syeh Lodge sits in state and drinks his jessamine-flavored tea and drenches himself with perfume as becomes a gentleman of Tripoli.

But never mind the rumors and the talk of conspiracy and massacre. This is the Desert, and it is peopled only with echoes; a place of death for what little there is to die in it. "*La Siwa Hu,*" the Arab says when he speaks of it. And he is right: "Nobody lives there but God."

And so you make your parting bow in the general direction of the Red Sea and step down once more into the heart of Cairo, which is now silent and black and brooding. Keep away from the Suk-en-Nahassim, and turn into the Khan Khalil, the main bazaar. Step gently. For, though it is the chief mart for rugs, shawls, carpets, and embroideries, and though every Monday and Thursday morning it is packed with all the traders and hucksters of Islam and of Christendom, it is a very old, a very tired place. It was built nearly seven hundred years ago by the famous Sultan El-Ashraf, the conqueror of Acre . . . and it is said that it is the site of the real tombs of the Caliphs.

The crooked, crowded streets which touch this bazaar on all sides are the most tangled of Cairo. A glimpse at the sky above the roofs reveals scarcely three yards of breadth, and often less. At times the copings meet; and the projecting cornices, the bulbous balconies of fantastic woodwork supported by gigantic corbels and brackets, seem to interlace like the outriggings of native craft in some Malay harbor.

All is dark and gloomy here, even on midday; for the streets are like narrow canyons. They are like precious Bokharan rugs of dark purple, dark maroon, and dark green, gallooned with black and picked out here and there with orange and cerise when the sun rays filter through or, at night, when an oil lamp glimmers above some

carved gate. You must be careful of mud-puddles and playing children as you step beneath vast, sweeping gateways or under deep verandahs. Even the women flitting from house to house, eager to communicate a choice bit of harem gossip to the daughter of their paternal aunt or the niece of their maternal grandfather, seem like dim silhouettes in spite of their white clothes. But there is beauty for the searcher after beauty. For there is fretted stone a-plenty, and age-darkened *saj* wood carved into the likeness of lace-work finer than the laces of Malines and Buckingham. And, when once your eyes have got used to the darkness, you begin to see that the wand of a magician . . . perhaps the very magician who made Aladdin's fortunes . . . must have touched the streets, half gently caressing, half grotesquely ironic. For suddenly you discover that not only has color been laid on white, not only has wood and stone been fretted into the likeness of lace; but there is color decorating color in a fantastic, endless series, there is line entangling line, arabesque enveloping arabesque, and elaboration elaborating elaboration.

There is no central idea of style or standard or taste. There cannot be. This is Cairo, the East, the home of utter, riotous democracy. What business is it of your neighbor, of your prince, of the Prophet himself, if you prefer broken lines to straight lines, the unexpected to the expected, clashes to harmonies, or vice versa? This is your own house, your own life, your own look-out. You can do what you please . . . and Nature can do what she pleases. And Nature does. For she clusters and mellows the whole with the graceful, feathered forms of innumerable palms.

There is one night in the year when all these dark mazes are lit up with a thousand glittering, winking lights. And that is the *Lelet el-Kadr*, the Night of Honor. On that night Cairo, with the rest of the world of Islam, celebrates the anniversary of the night when the Koran was revealed to the

Prophet Mohammed, in the year 609. It is a most solemn night. It is, in fact, the most blessed night in the Moslim year. For on this night the Sidr, which is the lotus tree and which bears as many leaves as there are human beings, is shaken in Paradise by angels, and on each leaf is inscribed the name of a person who dies within the coming year. So strong personal interest is behind the prayers that night, and it is good that every house in Cairo is well lighted . . . so that dark and evil djinns may not slip through the gloom and squat on your chest and cause the angels to shake down the wrong leaf.

But even the Night of Honor, the Night of Fear and . . . let us hope . . . of Repentance passes, and the next day is smiling and sunny, and of course a holiday. So all Cairo puts on its finest coat and silkenest turban and most voluminous *haik*. All the men swagger and strut, the women adjust their head-veils, which do not need adjusting at all; the little boys see if they can shout richer abuse than the other little boys, and the little girls rival each other in the consumption of greasy sweetmeats and the delicious dates of Tur, which are small and yellow and very sweet. The favorite resort for the holiday jollities . . . Cairo being Cairo and the East eternally the East . . . is of course the huge cemetery beyond the Bab el-Nasr, whence starts the Suez Road. And there, clear away from the corruption of the men of the Levant, the sneer of the tourists, the watchful, slightly anxious eyes of British soldiers, French judges, Italian bankers, and Swiss inspectors of custom receipts, the men and women and children . . . even the dogs and the grey, diminutive donkeys of Cairo . . . do resplendently, extravagantly, and noisily as they wish to do. There are tents and ambulancing coffee-houses, cook-shops and lemonade-stands, toy-booths and merry-go-rounds. There are bear-leaders, ape-leaders, fakirs, buffoons, jugglers, fortune-tellers, snake-charmers, and dancing-boys in women's attire. There is everything which makes life worth the

living . . . including a great deal of lovemaking . . . the lovemaking of Cairo which is frank, direct, and I fear a trifle indelicate to Western ears and prejudices.

The correct method of procedure is to tilt your *tarboosh* to a rakish angle (to show that you are a fast man), to tease your mustaches to the sharp point of a single, well-waxed hair, to shoulder your stick, and to stalk about with a nonchalant, devil-may-care air until you see a lady whose eyes seem to roll invitingly behind her veil. You must then strike an attitude, address her as "O Bride!" "O Female Pilgrim!" "O Dispenser of Delights!" and say whatever else you have to say. There is, of course, a chance that the Dispenser of Delights will refuse to dispense the same and will reply some such little thing as "May Allah cut out thy heart and feed it to the unclean pigs of

Syria!" "Curse thee for an unbelieving, thrice-unclean dog!" or "Verily I declare that thy ancestry is rotten and thy manners deplorable! Verily I declare that thy female progenitors have been shameless and disreputable since the days of Allah's creation!" Then you must retort, with a proper drawl, "*Wah, y'al agus!*"—Ho, Old Woman!—and move away very quickly. For the temper of the fair ones of Cairo is short, and they may tell you things about yourself which you can never translate into your own language word for word and expect to be believed.

For Cairo is Cairo, and the East is the East. Which does not mean that the East is inferior to the West. For who knows? There is always the possibility . . . pleasant or unpleasant, according to your race and faith and prejudices . . . that Mecca may outlive Manchester, and Cairo Chicago.



TO THE UNKNOWN

By David Morton

I SEARCH the passing faces for your face,
Here in the common street where crowds drift through,
Finding in each new loveliness some trace

Of all that dream-wrought beauty that is You.
Here where the prince and beggar show their wares,
Mid vulgar voices and the siren's scream,
Where each man seeks the thing for which he cares,
The silent dreamer searches for his dream.

Yet, something tells me I shall find you here:

Not in some dim cathedral of a wood
Where dusk is holy and the stars lean near
In faint attendance on the solitude.
But in this hurly-burly of a place,
Some day the street will blossom with your face.



FRIENDSHIP is love with a phlegmatic disposition.

A PERFECTLY NATURAL MAN

By Max Saher

IN appearance he was what might be styled a nature man, big, powerful, with curly locks, kind, gentle, trustful brown eyes, which, however, when they rested upon women underwent a metamorphosis that transformed the gentle, sleepy gaze to cruel alertness. He wore splendid clothes, generally of the rough sort that seemed to cover his body like a shaggy coat of hair; immaculate shoes and socks, shirts of delicately captivating tints, and, in summer, a belt that caught the eye like the polished breeching-strap of a well-fed horse.

Women adored Jack Weatherby. He brought to them life, strength, good will, good humor, healthy masculinity. At his approach lips broke into smiles and hands flew up in greetings. Apart from his personality, however, one of his charms for them was that he was a successful man. He lived well, "opened wine," rode in his car. He was, in fact, a kind of half-brute man of the world to whom this earth was a joyous playground and women human toys. He did not handle these human toys very delicately.

One late autumn, to the surprise of everyone, he married Lulu Covington, and "What a pity that Jack Weatherby has married!" became echoed about like the refrain of a popular song.

They had been married about seven years when I chanced to run across them at a semi-fashionable seashore resort. I was there to pay deference to a certain lake that contained big fish, not far off, and Jack Weatherby because he tabooed ultra places as lacking in soul. He claimed you could only find responsive, generous-hearted hu-

manity among the more liberated, the, in fact, sportily inclined. Not being especially learned, and not at all up in the epigrammatic style of conversation, he was rather given to the slangy kind. One of his pet expressions was: "We've got but once to live." The motto may have been said to control his life.

Jack Weatherby's wife—his Lily, he called her—was certainly not a part of his creed. He admitted quite frankly that he had not selected her from among the class he eulogized. His Lily certainly was not of the sporty class. She was a pale, statuesque creature, a bit tall, with spiritual strength that manifested itself plaintively. Her soft gray eyes held the loneliness of the waters of a secluded lake, and her wealth of fine-spun gold hair suggested the halo of a saint. Her presence affected Jack Weatherby peculiarly, and women smiled at the tears that sometimes, apparently wholly without cause, sprang to his eyes when he would catch sight of her coming toward him, with her Junoesque carriage and placid gait.

"Here comes the Lily," he would say, and the dimmed eyes and play of radiant expression were not unpleasant.

He had a way, however, of growing stern towards the Lily when he spoke to her. He would say, for instance, when she was about to seat herself in a certain chair, "Sit here, girl," indicating another, as though he liked to have people see her obey him. He would say it in such a manner that the women delighted in saying that he was a brute to his wife, and that she actually trembled when he spoke to her. She often did. As a matter of fact, I was

not long in observing that people, as a rule, pitied her, and not a few, in spite of his popularity, chastised Jack. The Lily was a pacifist, however, and there was never any open rupture.

II

AFTER a rainy spell, a certain day, by way of a surprise, dawned very beautiful.

It was the kind of morning when the sea sparkles and the air is so fresh and invigorating that one can readily imagine invisible angels passing it around, dashed with wine, in invisible cups. Everybody seemed suddenly revived and about earlier than usual.

Jack had "stayed out" and was playing tennis with a little Spanish-looking creature, with dark, luminous eyes, very marked brows and a very turned-up nose. In spite of these allurements, Jack had publicly remarked on her advent that it was her *mouth* that had caught him!

The Lily said nothing about either Clarissa or her mouth. Even when Jack stayed in town three evenings on "business" and Clarissa was away for a "week in the mountains," the Lily said nothing.

She was standing now, while he played tennis with her, beside a white column of the porch, a blue chiffon scarf about her shoulders, that the breeze was playing with at intervals.

"What do you think of husbands, Mrs. Weatherby?" I stepped up and put to her rather cruelly.

I had known Jack's Lily in the old days before she became his, and while I had never paid court to her, I was one of her many admirers who might have done so, and we were as society friendship goes good friends.

"I?" she asked, as she turned to me with an almost imperceptible start.

"Yes, what is your opinion, you know, on husbands in general?"

"I suppose what you really want to know is," and the Lily fixed her wonderful eyes somewhat, for her, defiant-

ly in mine, "what I think of my own husband!"

I believe I colored. The Lily quickly noticed this.

"Oh! I don't in the least mind your asking me," she exclaimed to cover my embarrassment, "I'm perfectly willing to tell you—only," and the Lily smiled, "I warn you they are rather sacred!"

I admitted to myself that such a view of Jack demanded a warning. I asked her if she wouldn't sit down in the vacant rocker next to the one I had been occupying and a moment later we were thus seated, the Lily passing the ends of the lovely blue chiffon scarf through her fingers.

"Don't for a moment," she said, suddenly turning to me, "think that I don't know what you mean! You suspect that Jack is having a flirtation with Clarissa Venable—that he is spending his evenings with her. I *know* that he is spending his evenings with her—and—"

"You just put up with it?" I asked, eyeing her curiously. "Why?"

"I put up with it because I've *got to*! I've got to forgive whatever he chooses to do—everything—because—"

She paused, a little bewildered as though she wanted to retreat, but seemed to steady herself and hold her ground.

"Because you are so in love with him?" I asked.

"No," her face grew deadly pale, "not because I am so in love with him! That," a little hysterical laugh escaped her, "doesn't count! It's because *he* loves *me*! Can't you see," she went on, "don't you understand that while I can stand what he does, he *couldn't* stand what I might do if—if I retaliated!"

She paused, confounded by the deep waters in which she found herself, but again gathered her courage and burst forth anew: "Nothing that he might do could change me, but a word or a look from me might change him—make him," the eyes upon me were rather staggering, but she went on, "something different—something that would be un-

happy and suffer—maybe go to pieces! You see," she apologized, "I *know* him!"

"And don't *you* suffer?"

A little twisted smile appeared, but instantly changed to an expression of startled pain. "Of course! Of course I suffer! And of course I know in other people's eyes I am a fool. But isn't any woman who really loves a fool?" she demanded tragically, the pain breaking into a kind of light on her countenance. "Isn't it always so? Can she afford to be anything but a fool? I know I can't! I know what it would mean," she laughed again, "if I were to be sensible about Jack! If I quarreled and complained—Jack wouldn't stand nagging one day!—he would stay away! I *know* he would," the Lily fought a sob, "and he would go to pieces—I *know* he would!"

The silence that followed, and the gaze of my questioning, somewhat unsympathetic eyes, was like the waters engulfing her, but she continued to struggle.

"I don't expect you to understand," she went on, "sometimes I don't myself! But," she hesitated, "you see, it's this way! No matter who he is with or what he does, I am his constant, his eternal love. He holds me above—I *know* he does—beyond all other women, and that is what I have to cling to. Why," she went on, the words breaking forth recklessly, "I am the only woman whose feet he has kissed!"

As she flung this forth I thought she looked like a floundering angel. But as I continued to stare at her, in spite of myself, derisively, even in pity, she

faded as an angel and faced me a woman on fire.

"Oh! you needn't pity me," she exclaimed exultantly, "I pity *them*! He is mine—even when he is with them he is mine, and they know it! He doesn't allow them to breathe my name, and he always leaves them—leaves them when they want him most, and comes to me!"

A sob caught her throat at this moment and she turned to me like a hunted thing, just as Jack took a run across the court up the steps and towards us eagerly, like a conquering hero demanding applause.

"I beat the life out of her!" he exclaimed to the Lily, mopping his brow and beginning to turn down his sleeves. "Did you see me socking it to her?"

He then turned rather fiercely to me. "What have you been saying to the Lily?" he asked. "She's got tears in her eyes!" And he leaned over and rather roughly wiped one with a scarlet silk handkerchief he had ripped out.

"What are you crying about, eh?" he asked her. "Quit it, do you understand!"

She looked at him a moment, subdued by his masculinity as she never failed to be, and that was attractively accentuated for the moment in her eyes by the recent tan of the sun and the damp curls clinging to his brow.

I got up as quickly as I could and left them.

"Maybe," I said, "he is a perfectly natural man and she a perfectly natural woman—I don't know!"

When I looked back Jack had his finger under her chin looking teasingly into her eyes.



ONE of the mysteries of the world is why women have not taken to drink more, considering the excuse they have.



THERE is nothing that love will not make a man believe—and doubt.

LOST

By James Hay, Jr.

SHE hated men. She hated him. Eight years before, he had taken her soul that was like a rose. She looked grimly at the red rose his rough departure had brushed from her corsage. That rose and the rose of her soul—each was as the other in his eyes.

The phonograph record, which had been running when he left the apartment, ran out. She turned off the machine.

She was like that record, something which had amused and then bored him. He had said he was through—he intended to marry another woman.

Her hatred dried up the springs of her emotion. She could not weep. She could not scream. All that was alive within her was her heart, heavier than woe. The only evidence of her anguish was the rasping of her fingernails against the palms of her hands. Her mind was a jumbled mixture of curses upon everything, particularly

upon him. Because of her loathing for him she despised all men.

Never again would a man mean anything to her. Even if he brought her all the flowers of summer, they could not repay for the ashes now in her mouth.

She, too, was through. Only one man could ever treat her so—and he only once.

The telephone bell rang. She took down the receiver, eager to affront, to insult, to hurt.

It was his voice. Her nostrils distended. Her lips went to a thin line. She hated him more than ever.

"Let's have dinner down-town tonight and talk things over," he said persuasively.

She hesitated, seeking scathing words. Her form, leaning against the wall, lost its rigidity.

"Very well," she agreed; "I'll meet you."

She picked up the bruised rose and replaced it in her corsage.



CORINNE

By George B. Jenkins, Jr.

IN her dreams
She was a vampire.
Men spent their all,
Showed her with jewels,
Fought with each other for the privilege of her society
But she was such a poor cook,
I positively had to discharge her.



THE LOVE FOOL

By Archie Bell

HELLO white man!" Naturally, I was startled and showed it. "Hello," I replied, as I looked across the big water-hole and saw a man dressed in Bedouin costume, his face partially wrapped in a gaudy calico scarf that hung over his head, ears and neck. It was not the English of an Englishman, which was all the more startling. I thought—but no, it could not be possible; no American would be away off here in the Arabian desert dressed as a Bedouin! I started around the great basin of masonry that was the handiwork of the ancient Romans, but the man did not stir as I approached him, not even to unfold the scarf and expose his face, which I thought was probably smiling. No white man in a desert peopled by yellow, brown and black men, could come across one of his kind in such a place and suppress a smile. And there was friendliness in his greeting: "hello white man." He must be a friend. Otherwise, he would have kept the scarf over his face and I could not have known.

"Shake," I shouted, as I extended my hand. He moved slightly and his hand shot forward from the big brown-striped mantle under which it had been concealed. It was a big white hand, tanned to a glossy copper by the desert sun; and after catching my hand in a tight grip, it fell back under the cloak.

"Well, this is a surprise, and I'm mighty glad to see you!" I said, trying to form some outline of his face from the brow and eyes which were visible.

"Are you?" he asked, with a doubtful inflection.

"Sure I am, but how in heaven's name did you . . . ?"

"Don't," he interrupted, shooting out his hand as if to silence my question. "Don't ask me anything. I suppose we will not have more than three minutes, for those brown beggars will be going; and I must go with them. Will you do me a very great favor?"

"You bet I will, if it's anything within my power."

"Well, it is within your power, all right. Perhaps it will seem to be pretty silly to you, but remember, it's a great favor to me. Pretend you're from home. See? Call me 'Fred'—that's my name. I want to hear a white man speak it again. Do you get the idea?"

"Sure I get the idea. Hello Fred!" I offered my hand again and he grasped it more firmly than before.

"Hello, old man, how's the boy?"

"Tom," I prompted.

"Tom, I am glad to see you away off here. How are all the folks?"

"Fine," I replied, "all send their best to you."

"Say that again!" said the stranger, almost choking with emotion.

"All the folks are fine and send their best to you."

"When did you see them last?"

"Just before I left home. When they knew I was going to see you, they sent all kinds of messages—so many that I forgot them. The little girl, you know the one I mean"—I hesitated.

"Yes, go on," he said breathlessly.

"She said she was sorry and that she'd wait until you came back, no matter how long it was, because she realized that everything was exactly as

it had to be. She loves you, Fred; the sort of love that lasts."

"You believe that?" he urged, almost in a whisper.

"Sure I believe it; I know it."

"She speaks of me sometimes?"

"Sometimes! I should say she does speak of you! She seems to talk of nothing else; and when she isn't speaking, she's thinking."

"And she knows everything by this time? She knows that I can never go back to her?"

"She doesn't think of that part of it. She loves you, and you know that's enough for a woman. When she loves, she loves, and that is all there is to it."

"You're a man, and you can tell me; do you really believe what she says?"

"Sure I believe it, every word. Fred, you ought to be a happy man, for she really loves you and although you are far away from her, she loves you just the same—that tells the story. She doesn't want you to forget that she loves you, whatever happens to you."

"Forget her!" The man sneered and gestured in the direction of the tents. His companions were coming back to the water-hole. They had been chatting with the dragoman, who was near the cook-tent.

"We will not shake hands," he said. "I don't want them to see that we have been talking too much. God bless you, Tom, for what you have said. You don't know what you have done for the most wretched white man in the world. Perhaps you can't understand; and then again, perhaps you can. Try and realize what it has meant to me to talk to you. When you see her again, tell her that I shall love her until my last breath. That's all! God bless you Tom, and God pity me!"

He turned away with no ceremony and grasping the reins of his big Arab horse, he threw himself into the saddle, as the others did so, and the four of them galloped away towards the South, leaving me sitting on the Roman masonry, watching the small stream of water as it came trickling out of the ground to disappear in the hot, dry sands a few

yards away. Men came up with droves of camels, which drank and departed, after their drivers had filled goat-skins with water, which they swung over the backs of their horses. Still I sat beside the spring and wondered about the stranger with whom I had spoken. Perhaps he was a half-breed lunatic suffering from too much sun. Perhaps—but I could not satisfy myself concerning him and his story. That he had a story, I had no doubt. Perhaps what appealed most, was the suspicion that he was an American! An American in the Arabian desert, living as a Bedouin! Perhaps the dragoman knew; perhaps not. I did not want to mention the subject to him, unless he indicated that he knew the identity of my chance acquaintance. The gong sounded for dinner and I took my seat at the table in the tent. The dragoman entertained me with legends and stories of Basta, the Roman water-hole in the Arabian desert, which we were making a convenient point for a night's camp. Perhaps there had been a city here at some time in history! Perhaps, Moses and the Children of Israel camped by this spring, when they were making their pilgrimage from Egypt towards the Promised Land. But not one word of the white man in the Bedouin garb! The wretched white man who chanced to come to Basta as our caravan halted there for the night! I was convinced that the dragoman did not know, and probably he was convinced that I had not suspected the truth, although he must have seen us standing together by the water-hole.

"Who were those men who talked to you and then rode off to the South?" I asked him, as we were sitting near the campfire late in the evening.

"Arabs."

"All of them?"

"No, there was one white man, but I did not talk to him."

"Who was he?"

"Nobody seems to know," replied the dragoman. "Poor devil, I pity him!"

"Yes?"

"It's a long story. I'll tell you about

it tomorrow, as we ride along towards Petra."

II

NEXT morning, the tents were swung over the backs of the horses and started along the trail towards Petra, the almost forgotten city in the heart of the Arabian desert. The dragoman filled his bottles at the spring of Basta, wrapped them in towels, which he had dipped in the water, a desert trick that anticipated the thermos-bottle, hung them at the side of the saddle-bags, where they would sway in the wind, and in half an hour, we had started towards the pinkish-purple prongs of rock that mark the location of the ancient city.

I wanted to hear the story of the American desert man, and even hoped that the dragoman would relate it while I was having my morning coffee, but he did not, and he made no signs of doing so, as our horses trotted along over the rocky, dry sands. All the morning he said nothing on this subject, but kept his face muffled in his scarf and urged his horse, in the Arab manner, by constant kicking as he sat in the saddle.

Towards noon, we ran into a sand storm that blew the fine particles in a circle, like a buzz-saw, the horses crying out from the pain caused by this knife at their legs.

"We'll stay here for lunch," he said, as we approached El Kedar, a mud village in which we soon found a few wretched desert men huddled together in a coffee-house, drinking black liquid and smoking.

"Bad day for riding, but we are close to the Wady Musa (Valley of Moses), and the sand does not blow there."

I thought again of the American, and wondered if he, too, had reached some coffee-house at an oasis; because I had no knowledge of the geography of the desert, and did not know that oases were few in the direction that he and his companions had taken from Basta.

"You were going to tell me about that man who came to Basta last night," I prompted, after the dragoman had seated himself beside me in the coffee-

house, spreading my lunch on an improvised table.

"Do you know, or can you guess, what the Arabs call that man?" he asked, apparently divining my thoughts and anticipating my question. I shook my head, so he continued: "the Arabs call him the 'Love Fool'"—with a forced smile that half betrayed his sympathy. "These desert men, they cannot understand, and they laugh when they tell about him. But I do not laugh. I am from the city and I know and understand."

"He is an American?" I asked, wearying of the preliminaries.

"Yes."

"How long has he been here in the desert?"

"Perhaps two years, perhaps three, I cannot tell exactly. Nobody seems to know anything about him during the early days; but one day a caravan that arrived at El Ma'an from the east, reported that a white man was camped with some desert Bedouins, 'too far South'—which means that a 'Christian dog' had been permitted closer to Mecca and Medina than El Ma'an; and this is not according to Moslem regulations. Of course we knew who the man was, because we know his story; and since that time, he has been seen in all parts of the Arabian desert. The desert men always talk about him, when they congregate at the coffee-houses to chat about their journeys into the baked country. 'Saw the "Love Fool,"' they will report to a group, around the coffee-urn. Then they will laugh. 'No woman makes such a fool of an Arab,' they chuckle. Always they speak of him in this way; always they laugh. But as I say, I have lived in the city, and I understand."

The dragoman got no further with his story, because he was interrupted by a noisy group of Arabs at a nearby table. They had a discussion about the game they were playing and asked him to act as a referee. The Moslem despises a Christian, but he acknowledges his respect in these indirect ways. A dragoman pilots white men across the

desert wastes, and through the cities. This gives him a certain distinction among his fellows, and his word is often one of authority in the lesser disputes of their inevitable and constant bickerings.

When the dragoman left their table, I had finished my lunch, and he suggested that we move on towards our camp at Petra. Although he had said that the sandstorm would be less in the great Valley of Moses, we were unable to converse, except by signs, as our horses stumbled and slipped along the stony trail. It was after dinner, before he again took up the story of the white man. We were sitting before a campfire of sage and dried oleander brush, and the Arab boys not far away were crooning their desert songs for an accompaniment, as I heard the tale of the "Love Fool" with the white face, two-thirds covered by the calico scarf of the Bedouins.

III

He came from America, with a party of university professors, who made excavations in a mound east of Jordan that marked the site of a forgotten city. The funds for the expedition were provided by a man of wealth, whose daughter was to marry the recently-graduated college youth the following winter. It was early in the spring when they arrived at Damascus, where they outfitted for the summer's work. In a few days, they went to the desert, where they camped in tents, with no plans to return until late in the autumn. The man who paid for this tour of exploration had promised to visit them early in September to witness the fruits of their research. And he had promised to bring his daughter with him: A happy meeting in the desert was anticipated by the youthful lovers, who were to be separated but a few months by the rather unusual expedition of which he was made a member through the generosity of his future father-in-law.

All went well enough for a few days, perhaps weeks. A crowd of natives were engaged at the digging in the day-

time while their employers were kept busy taking impressions of unearthed tablets, cataloguing fragments of pottery, and in a scientific manner, reconstructing the city of the past. The youth was occupied with the novelty of the thing at first and entered into each day's routine with enthusiasm. In the evening, they gathered around the campfire or in the tents and discussed the day's findings. It was all a novelty, and it might have filled the time until they started back for their American homes, had not chance brought to the vicinity a band of nomadic Bedouins. They put up their tents about a mile away, sought employment at the point where the excavations were being made, and attached themselves to the crew of native workers.

At night, all the natives went to the Bedouin encampment, many of them returning to the camp of the Americans after midnight. One day they invited the Americans to join them, bespeaking the charms of their dancing-girls and tom-tom players. All declined the invitation—all but the youngest member of the expedition. Evenings in the desert were beginning to become monotonous, particularly so when he knew that there was an interesting diversion not more than a mile away. He had heard the faint echoes of the tom-toms and singing, so he consented to join them for the novelty of the excursion.

Usually, these desert folk do not receive the white man as one of their own, and programs of music and dancing are varied according to the occasion, but the Americans were paying good wages and they were friendly towards them, so it happened that the only one who had visited their tents was most hospitably received. Cups of ceremonial coffee were frequent and smoking materials were placed around for an unusual celebration. The Bedouins reclined on brilliant rugs and the entertainment took on the appearance of an extraordinary event. A few dancing-girls whirled and gestured, the tom-toms and flute music and singing smote

the evening air with barbaric fury, and the American youth, satisfied with the diversion, indicated that he was ready to go back to his camp.

But the Arabs protested. The best was yet to come, for their principal dancer had consented to entertain the white visitor. Usually she would not dance at all; but she had caught a glimpse of him, and she had sent word that she would assist in the festivities, after the others had finished. So he leaned back on his rug and waited. After the coffee cups had been filled with fresh liquid from the brazier, the players seemed to strike their instruments with more fury than ever. The flute-players screeched and from a tent back in the semi-darkness emerged the star dancer of the evening. She was quite gorgeously outfitted in spangled shawls, strings of beads and medallions. She looked neither to right nor left, but swung herself into the center of the group and immediately began the barbaric dance of the eastern desert.

At its close, when she fell exhausted to the ground, she timed herself to fall in a heap on the rug where the American was reclining, propped up on his elbow. When she observed that she startled him, she laughed; and reaching out, she took the coffee-cup from his hand and took a deep draught, for which she thanked him. Then she reached for his cigarette and taking a deep puff, she blew the smoke in his face and laughed again. Evidently enjoying herself at his embarrassment, she amused the other Bedouins, until it was time for the natives to go back to their tents, and their white guest went with them. Perhaps at the moment, he had no thought of returning. But he went again the next night, the next and the next. Finally, it became a habit. In the evening, he joined the workers and together they tramped across the desert to the little hillock on which were perched the low black and white striped tents. The other Americans said among themselves that he went too often, but when they ventured the suggestion to the youth, he assured them that it was

his own affair, and occupied, as they were, with their work, they paid no further attention.

Finally, the youth was not satisfied with his nocturnal prowlings in the desert and his associates missed him in the afternoons. They were satisfied concerning his whereabouts, for the natives had told them. It was reported that he had fallen completely under the spell of the dancing-girl. But no further attention was paid to the affair, because the weeks had passed and one day a message came from Damascus that their benefactor had arrived in Syria. With him was his daughter and there transpired the happy reunion of the two lovers. Perhaps they were tactless in permitting the laborers to see them together, for news travels fast in the desert and the first night that the dancing-girl failed to receive a visit from her white friend, she was teased by the Bedouins. What did he care for her? What had they always told her? A white girl came, and what did he care for a desert dancing-girl!

The days and nights passed and the youth did not go to the Bedouin encampment. The laborers were told that their work would be completed on a certain day. "And your American does not even come to say good-bye," the Bedouins said to the dancing-girl.

But the day before their departure for Damascus, he did go. He was not satisfied to leave forever, without seeing her just once again. So in the afternoon, when the others were resting, he stole away to the encampment. There he found her sitting on a rug in her tent. She made no signs of reproach for his neglect. He must not suspect what was in her mind. She gave him coffee, played on a gourd-shaped harp and sang desert songs. He lay on a rug and she brushed his hair with her hand. More coffee, and more coffee! Of a sudden, he was seized by a sudden dizziness and fell over so quickly that he barely had time to utter an exclamation, but in his last fleeting moments of consciousness, he knew that

the girl had put a strong narcotic in the black fluid that had passed his lips.

How long he slept, he probably never knew. But when he awakened, he was alone in the tent. The men had returned from their labors, after receiving their last pay, and he could hear their voices. Also, he could hear the voice of the dancing-girl. She was telling them something that caused them to laugh and shout. With some difficulty, he raised himself and went outside the tent. The men looked at him and burst into a roar; but he was still too dazed to realize. He tried to speak to them and to gesture, but his brain reeled and he could not do so, and barely realized how swiftly their whole demeanor towards him had changed. He went to a pile of rugs, for although he did not know it, the tents, excepting the one in which he was lying, had been done up in bundles for a hasty departure that night. He tried to raise himself and endeavored to walk, and finding that he could do so, he thought the best thing to do was to attempt to reach his own people, but as he tried to pass, the dancing-girl stood out from the crowd of men and handed him a large hand mirror, suggesting that he look at his face. He did so and dropped the mirror in horror. Still, his chief thought was to get back to his own camp, but as his brain became clearer, he picked up the mirror to make sure that his eyes did not deceive him.

On his face was tattooed two lewd dancing girls, one on each cheek, their draperies waving into his mouth and nostrils. It was blue ink, and he knew that it was indelible. It was there for life, but he went to a jug of water and tried to rub them off. Then he picked up the mirror again. He muttered a curse at the girl, but she laughed mockingly and the men laughed with her. He was powerless and he knew it, as he sank down on the pile of rugs and wept. He knew that he could never again mingle with white men. Frantic hours followed, threats and maledictions; but they were met with taunts and jeers.

The last tent fell and the bundles were placed on the backs of horses and mules. The Bedouins were leaving for the eastern desert. Would he go with them—with his dancing-girl? He must choose quickly. And in an irrational moment, he pencilled a line to his fiancée. As her father's men could tell her, he was infatuated, charmed by a dancing-girl and he would go with her. The message was sent to a runner to the tents of the excavators, and when it reached them, the Bedouins had moved beyond the range of hills and escaped into the unknown.

The story goes that the white man was soon deserted by his fickle dancing-girl, who passed away with another caravan, leaving her disfigured white man with three or four Bedouins, who were going towards the south. A sand scarf was wrapped over the white man's face, and when others saw him, he rarely let it fall. But the story of the "Love Fool" soon spread over the desert, so that he was known to great numbers of the wandering tribes.

IV

THE train runs but three times a week from El Ma'an to Damascus, and the desert folk who chance to be in the neighborhood come to the station to see it pass, as do country folk in more thickly populated countries of the world. Sometimes they come a day ahead of time and lie in their thick coats around the little station, crossing the road occasionally to drink a cup of coffee and then return to their slumbers on the sunny sands.

As we were waiting for the train two weeks later, I was strolling along the track, trying to pass away the hour, when a voice stopped me. A man with a calico scarf tied up over his cheeks in the Bedouin manner approached me and said: "Will you shake hands?"

"Will I?" I laughed, grasping his hand tightly.

"Give my regards to everyone," he

said with some emotion. "Can you imagine what it means to me to see another white man going back to—to her? Tell her that I have never loved another girl and that I never shall. She won't understand—for she proba-

bly never knew—but never mind, tell her anyway."

And the train came along, after I had spent a monotonous hour, and whisked me away, just as I wanted to remain.



FEMINA

By Harold Speakman

ONLY the firelight, and she, and I. She was close, close, beside me. Her head rested upon my breast. Faintly, from a neighboring studio came the song of a violin—a delicate yearning melody of Schubert. "The soul of a man," I said. "Do you hear it?"

"No," she answered, "I was listening to your breathing. I was breathing with you."

And presently, two small, soft hands stole up and shut from my ears even the faint music of the violin.



THE RECTOR

By Lizette Woodworth Reese

A TALL man, bent, though not with years, but books;
His eyes a trifle keen, but flower-blue,
A gusty ruddiness about his looks,
And in his voice a gusty something, too.
Part Sussex he, so frank, some deem him hard;
Part Donegal, and so both warm, and quaint;
A proper figure for a minster yard,
And yet too much the man to stay the saint.
A dog, a garden he loves with all his heart;
Each day reads in his thumbed Greek testament;
Smokes a worn pipe; talks market in the lane
To the old fishman in his squeaking cart;
Then climbs to some poor lad, who, fever-spent,
Counts the long moments till he comes again.



LOVE

By Helen Woljeska

I

SHE wrote him:

Yes, I love you. But do you truly love me? Do you love me with your spirit and your heart as well as with your blood? Am I to you the One Woman above all others, the Queen to whose service your whole life is pledged, the Saint at whose feet you will worship for evermore? Do you dream of me, as the tainted river of the plains dreams of the mountain peak's chaste snows? Do you long for me as the prisoner in ignoble bonds longs for the pure joys of freedom? Will my love be the consummation of your happiness, the crown of your life, the salvation of your soul? Tell me that this is so—and I will come to you.

He did not answer.

II

Again she wrote him:

I love you, Dear. I want to be the wife of your heart, the mother of your children, your comrade in work, your sweetheart in play, your nurse when you are ill, your friend when you are in trouble, yours, yours always! Tell me that you love me as I love you—and I will come to you.

He did not answer.

III

And then she wrote:

Darling! Why do you not answer? My heart is breaking. Do you not know that I love you? I cannot live without you. I will be your mistress, your servant, your slave, anything you wish . . . Only let me come to you—let me be near you! I want to kiss your brown hands; I want to weep against your knee. O God! If my love might glorify one hour of your adored life, I would not have lived in vain. . . .

Now he wrote to her:

Come. For I love you as you love me.



THE trouble with the hymeneal knot is that it is often tied too tightly. Many a husband reminds one of a 16 neck in a 15½ collar.



A TAILOR is a man who takes your measurements, and then makes your clothes to fit a dummy.

PAULINE AND THE UPLIFT

By Van Vechten Hostetter

PAULINE was a factory girl and a most extraordinary one at that. One could hardly call her pretty, and she lacked the starved and pallid look so familiar to those that attend lectures on the condition of her kind. Pauline's foreman was neither a humanitarian nor a white slaver. He was quite a curiosity himself. He didn't curse Pauline when she was late for work, nor did he call at her home to offer assistance when she was absent and her sister reported her ill.

Pauline received six dollars a week for ten hours a day in the factory, and her sister Nellie, who was only sixteen, received four. Her little brother Albert sold papers nightly and it was a dull week in which he did not make two dollars. Her father earned a dollar and a quarter a day when he worked, and he worked most of the time. He felt himself at perfect liberty, when it suited his fancy, to remain at home to loaf and chat or quarrel with his wife.

The children's earnings were sufficient to keep the family, and most of the old man's wages were banked. The rest of them usually went for an inexpensive and highly efficient brand of whiskey. When Pauline's father had been investing in this commodity he went home in ugly mood, cursed roundly, found fault with his supper, smashed a little furniture and retired. The following day he would remain at home to repair the furniture, but he never apologized; had he done so his wife, Mary, would have lost all her respect for him. Mary regarded her old man, George, as the salt of the earth and wouldn't have traded him

for the President of the United States.

The family home was an unpretentious, but partly modern, affair. It lacked a bath. However, the combination kitchen and dining-room boasted a good range with a capacious reservoir, and of a Saturday night the children and old George and Mary took turns in a washtub.

One man regarded Pauline as the most perfect creature the world had ever known. He was Frank, her fellow. He worked in a mill for fifteen dollars a week. It was more than enough to support his mother and him in their four-room home, so Frank was able to lay up a tidy sum each week, even after showing Pauline a good time.

In a couple of years Frank and Pauline expected to be married. They were agreed this step should not be taken until a few hundred dollars had been saved and they were not inconvenienced seriously by the waiting, though Frank did hate to have Pauline working every day. Still, he was a philosopher and noted that labor wasn't hurting his girl. She had a good, rich color and had never been seriously ill a day in her life.

One night a week Frank took Pauline to a first-class motion-picture theater, and one night they had gallery seats at the Palace. Pauline preferred the motion pictures. She loved to shudder with the heroines and hiss the villains under her breath. She admired all the heroes and noted that all bore resemblance to Frank.

A bite in a Childs restaurant after the show and then the long walk home on unfrequented streets, planning the

future and stopping here and there for a kiss.

One night a week Frank took his mother to another motion-picture show and one night he spent at home with her.

Other evenings Frank and his mother went across the street to old George's and the families spent a few hours talking, laughing and drinking beer.

How long this sort of thing might have continued nobody knows. Pauline and Frank and their kin were discovered by a band of inspired men and women, who were shocked almost beyond expression to learn that such conditions could exist in the twentieth century—and in America! However, they were not shocked beyond action. Led by a soulful man with a wonderful flowing gray mane and a warm-hearted woman, who had so many servants she didn't know what to do, they launched a campaign of education.

Pauline and Frank and all their relatives were turned inside out, investigated and analyzed. The factory was inspected. The mill was inspected. The family homes were surveyed. All this was done thoroughly and by experts. No mistakes were made. It was a complete and scientific job.

The revelations were appalling.

Frank and Pauline were frankly informed of their true condition. Their homes were breeding places of disease and vice. They were starved and their faces were being ground. They were utterly wretched in mind, body and estate. They lived in cheap houses, ate cheap food, visited cheap theaters where immoral pictures were exhibited, drank cheap beer and labored every day. The liberators did none of these things, and, being experts, they reached the inevitable conclusion that anybody that did must be wretched. They had excellent homes and excellent food and a million comforts and conveniences. They knew how unspeakably miserable they should be if suddenly deprived of all these blessings, and so, of course,

they knew how speechlessly miserable Pauline and Frank and all their loved ones were. They knew it better than their beneficiaries, the poor things were so ignorant!

At first Frank and Pauline and their kinsfolk couldn't believe it. It didn't seem possible, they had all been so contented and all. They had never dreamed they were in such a state.

Pauline was the first to be convinced. She was impressionable. (That was why the criminal motion pictures destroyed her moral fibre.) These people were experts; they had been to universities and they had degrees and they knew. What did she and Frank know? Had they ever been to college?

Frank fought the truth bitterly, it was so ugly; but at last he realized his folly and confessed Pauline and the liberators were right. He became a disciple of the soulful man with the flowing gray mane. However, from force of habit, he stuck to his job in the mill, though he knew it was ruining his health.

One day Frank received a raise of two dollars a week. He was entitled to five, he thought, so he flew into a rage and quit. He joined the Industrial Workers of the World, and with a satchel full of literature and rum started off to stump the United States for liberty. In Chicago a policeman tried to interfere with his inalienable right to use profane and obscene language on the streets and his equally inalienable right to incite a riot. He shot the policeman and killed him and eventually was sent to prison for twenty years. They tried to keep it all from his mother in the almshouse, but she got hold of a newspaper and read as much as she could of it before her heart broke.

Pauline, realizing that there was only one way for a girl with her wages to keep body and soul together, deliberately adopted that way and took Nellie with her. Old George and his wife, set in their ways, defied the light. They pleaded with the girls in vain and prayed for them. They joined a

church. George conceived a notion that this trial was punishment of his past wickedness, and believed when he gave up drink that the girls would come home. They did not come.

The night the girls were arrested the first time George went to the station-house and was permitted to see them. They were still drunk and told him to go to hell. He ran to a saloon, got crazy drunk, went home and blew

his brains out. Mary, who fought to get the gun away from him until he knocked her senseless, recovered consciousness and she was stark mad.

The soulful man with the flowing gray mane ran for Congress and was elected by an overwhelming majority. The warm-hearted woman, who had so many servants she didn't know what to do, hired more servants and wrote a book called "The Joy of Service."



ROAD SONGS

By Odell Shepard

MORNING

LET me have my fill of the wide blue air
And the emerald cup of the sea
And a long white road whereon to fare
And it is enough for me.

For the love of a man is a goodly thing
And the love of a woman is true,
But give me a rollicking song to sing
And a love that is always new.

My heart is a rover, I cannot stay,
And blithe as the wind am I
When free and afoot on a winding way
Beneath the great blue sky.

EVENING

It's a long, dim road and a weary road
And a hard, steep road to climb;
The wind bites chill on the barren hill.
At home it is firelight time.

The sunset pales; along the vales
The cottage candles shine
And twinkle through the early dew.
Thank God that one is mine!

And dark and late she'll watch and wait
Beyond the last long mile
For the weary beat of homing feet
With her wise and patient smile.



HELP!

By Winthrop Parkhurst

WHEN he was a very little boy and she was a very little girl they used to make mud-pies together. They threw the mud in each other's faces and had a perfectly wonderful time and enjoyed themselves immensely for a while until, as they grew a trifle older, they preferred to do something more amusing, and ran around on the lawn furiously instead and sat on the porch afterward and drank lemonade and looked at picture-books until it was time to go home and be put to bed. They always promised each other, when the time came for parting, that they would surely see each other on the morrow. And when the morrow arrived they always kept their promise and played together again and ran around on the lawn furiously and sat on the porch afterward and drank lemonade and looked at picture-books just as they had done before.

They had a perfectly wonderful time for a while, but then, as they grew a trifle older, they preferred to do something more amusing and decided to play croquet instead. Which they did, and cheated on the sly and sat on the porch afterward and drank lemonade just as they had done before (but now the lemonade had a dash of vichy in it which made it nicer) and had a perfectly wonderful time for a while till, as they grew a trifle older, they preferred to do something more amusing and decided to go horseback-riding instead. Which they did; and hired saddle-horses which cost two dollars an hour and rode furiously into the country and stopped off at half-way houses and drank mint juleps and looked into

each other's eyes till it was time to go home and be helped to bed.

They always promised each other, when the time came for parting, that they would surely see each other on the morrow. And when the morrow came they always kept their promise and rode again into the country and drank mint juleps and looked into each other's eyes and had a perfectly wonderful time and enjoyed themselves immensely. Until, as they grew a trifle older, they preferred to do something more amusing and decided to get married instead. Which they did, and cheated each other on the sly and sat on the porch every evening and drank whisky (but now the whisky had no vichy in it since they preferred it straight) and had a perfectly stupid time for a while, till, as they grew a trifle older, they decided they couldn't stand it any longer and made up their minds to do something more amusing and go in for separate careers and get a divorce. Which they did, and hired lawyers which cost \$200 an hour and set out furiously for Reno on a through express.

But, alas, on the way the train was wrecked. He was killed outright, and she died in a local hospital soon after. And only an infant daughter was left, who was too young to be told the sad news. So she was simply allowed to play occasionally with a little boy who lived next door. And she and the little boy used to make mud-pies together and throw mud in each other's faces and have a perfectly wonderful time and enjoy themselves immensely. But then, as they grew a trifle older . . .

LE CANTONNIER

By Emile Delta

JE te dis que tu ne te marieras pas avec le cantonnier.

— Pourtant, papa, c'est un brave garçon. Et puis, tu sais combien il est travailleur, économique ; combien il a bon cœur.

— Taratata, je ne sais rien de ça. . . . Au surplus, posséderait-il toutes les qualités, je te dis et te répète qu'il ne sera jamais ton mari. A-t-on jamais vu un sans-le-sou, un gars qui ne gagne pas de quoi se nourrir convenablement épouser l'héritière d'un meunier ?

— Pourquoi non ? D'abord, il n'est pas obligé de rester cantonnier. Tu te plains, depuis que nous avons perdu ma pauvre maman, que tu ne sais où donner de la tête ; que je ne suis qu'une enfant qui ne t'aide en rien, au contraire. . . . Vois-tu, petit père, si tu avais auprès de toi et pour toujours un gendre qui s'occuperait un peu de ton moulin et . . . beaucoup de ta grande fille que t'aime bien, je suis certaine que tu t'en réjourais.

— Des paroles, cela ! . . . Crois-moi, tu n'es encore qu'une gamine. Ce n'est pas parce que le cantonnier s'arrête à l'entrée de la cour, à te faire les yeux doux pendant qu'il perd son temps à râcler la route sans besoin, que tu l'aimes ; ne t'illusionne point. . . . D'ailleurs, faut que ça finisse ! . . . Je défendrai à ce drôle de s'approcher d'ici ; je préfère casser moi-même les cailloux du chemin plutôt que de les voir casser, à ma porte, par ce coureur de filles ! . . .

— Père ! . . .

— Tais-toi ! . . . Je sors. Si je le rencontre, je lui ferai la commission sans attendre et je t'assure que je ne prendrai pas de mitaines.

. . . A deux kilomètres du bourg, la route forme une courbe prononcée, et descend soudain, rapide, vers la jolie rivière qui gazouille au bas, tout au bas, étroite et chatoyante comme un ruban de soie.

“Tournant dangereux” indique une plaque du Touring-club, en lettres blanches sur fond bleu.

Sur fond bleu ! . . . Le bas de la côte se détache aussi sur fond bleu, bordé d'un double liseré vert. . . . Est ce l'eau de la rivière qui est bleue ainsi ou n'est-ce point plutôt le firmament qui s'y mire ?

L'endroit est idéalement séduisant et j'acclamerai volontiers—tels les anciens Romains saluant le gladiateur aux arènes—l'être humain qui, bondissant du haut de la montée, s'en viendrait râvir un linceul à l'onde chantante, que caresse amoureusement, semble-t-il, la roue tictac-quante du moulin.

Le cantonnier a mission de travailler au bon entretien de cette route montueuse. Il s'en acquitte avec dévouement.

Les ornières y sont rares, jamais de lointaine date ; elles sont vite comblées. Les pierres dangereuses sont soigneusement écartées ; le fossé toujours très proprement curé et la berge, coupée à distances égales par des rigoles bien en pente et bien droites, se montre douce et propice au chemineau fatigué.

Et quand de loin, très loin, le voyageur distingue, gigantesque, à l'horizon, cette côte dont le sommet paraît percer le ciel, il ne s'en soucie : il la connaît comme étant l'œuvre d'un cantonnier soigneux et zélé, coquette à l'œil, peu dure à gravir.

. . . Ce soir-là, l'homme courbé sur

un tas de silex, un masque aux grosses mailles de métal abritant le visage, suait à brandir furieusement sa masse d'acier.

Près de lui, une voix menaçante :

“— Beau cantonnier, mon ami, je te défends de continuer à venir rôder sous les fenêtres du moulin. Ma fille n'est pas pour toi et si j'apprends que tu cherches à l'enjôler par de belles paroles ou par de belles manières, je te casserai les reins comme à un chien! . . . T'as compris? . . .”

Il ne protesta point; il se savait coupable.

Car ils étaient fondés les reproches du père indigné; oui, il s'efforçait de plaire à la fille du meunier. Il l'aimait, il en était certain; c'est pourquoi, lorsqu'il la rencontrait, il trouvait pour lui parler, quoique n'ayant pas grande instruction, des mots charmants, nullement préparés et qui abondaient sur ses lèvres.

“— Je te casserai les reins!” Les terribles paroles bourdonnaient encore à son oreille quand, la nuit venue, harassé par l'effort bestial du labeur quotidien, il s'endormit.

Rêva-t-il de *son* image, de l'image de la gracieuse jeune fille du riche meunier, qu'en des moments de chimérique espérance il ambitionnait d'épouser? Peut-être. Rêves de gueux sont peu couteux et, parfois, si réconfortants!

L'aube a percé les vitres de l'unique fenêtre de l'étroite cabane du cantonnier. Les premiers rayons du soleil ont escaladé déjà la cime de la côte et, augmentant leur nombre, s'épandent sur la route blanche, sur les accotements, dans l'herbe humide de rosée, sur les fleurs.

Les reins étreints par une large ceinture de flanelle rouge, il a repris son travail accablant de la veille.

Il frappe à coups redoublés le silex dont les éclats volent autour de lui, aigus et luisants.

“— Oh! . . . quel est l'imprudent dont le cheval descend ainsi la route à bride abattue?”

Le cantonnier a laissé son outil; il a relevé son masque et regarde :

“— Comment! c'est une femme que voilà dans la voiture. Sa bête est emballée; elle n'en est plus maîtresse! . . .”

Le cantonnier, pris d'un pressentiment subit, abandonne le tas de pierres pour s'avancer et mieux voir:

“— Oui! c'est *elle*! . . . La malheureuse! . . . Elle est perdue! . . .”

Dans une galopade infernale, l'attelage court à la mort.

La bête ne semble plus toucher le sol de ses sabots tellement elle fonce, affolée, l'œil luisant, les naseaux au vent.

Tout à l'heure, à l'instant; dans une minute, dans une seconde, le cheval, la carriole et *elle*—elle dont les cris déchirants implorant du secours—vont culbuter, broyés, au bas de la côte, à la porte du moulin.

Il a couru se camper sur le milieu de la route.

L'animal l'aperçoit, dresse l'oreille; mais ne ralentit point sa course.

Il lui saute à la tête et s'y cramponne.

L'animal fléchit des pieds de devant, tombe, roule, glisse sur le flanc—entrainant avec lui son fardeau, qu'il écrase.

Le meunier vint. De grosses larmes plein les yeux il embrassa sa fille échappée au danger. Puis, avec d'infimes précautions, il transporta, dans la plus belle chambre du moulin en pleurs, le cantonnier-sauveteur.

Le blessé, vigoureux, débordant de sève, fut tôt remis de ce qu'il appelait “son accident.”

Il avait été soigné, dévotement, par la fille du meunier. Elle devint sa femme et il ne s'en montra pas autrement surpris: il avait l'intuition de cet heureux événement.

Le beau-père rit maintenant du malheur évité. Quand il parle de son gendre, c'est pour remarquer :

“— Je l'avais menacé de lui casser les reins; il s'en est acquitté lui-même, le coquin, et comment? . . . Restait à prendre la fille; c'est fait. . . . Vivent la jeunesse et l'amour! . . .”

THE DRAMATIC CRITIC AND THE UNDRAMATIC THEATER

By George Jean Nathan

IN the season theatrical presently in its late twilight no more droll entertainment has been vouchsafed the people than the vehement resuscitation of the ancient repartee as to the status in the playhouse of the dramatic critic. In the badinage, almost everyone from Mr. Abraham Erlanger down to the Court of Appeals has participated, and the net result has been, if not entirely convincing, at least provocative of a wholesome and genuine amusement.

Not the least chic feature of the enterprise has been the perfectly straight face with which the parties on both sides of the fence have gone about the discussion: though one must of course allow that farce is thus best conducted. And not the least wistful feature of the business has been the balmy ignorance with which both sides have issued their respective most flooring grunts—to say nothing of the attendant inconsequences. In an attempt to bring light out of chaos, let us therefore endeavour to engage the question with an eye cool and impartial.

This question, despite the gaudy bosh with which it has been enveloped by the parties thereto, whether managerial or critical, is, at the bottom, one of absurdly facile decipherment. Stripped of its fine feathers and obscuring indignations, it presents itself, quite nude, as merely this: Is there a place on Broadway for dramatic criticism? The reply to which simple question, equally simple, is: No. And the seeming assumption on the part of a number of our managers that there is, in their theaters, a place for such criticism is,

to say the least, in view of the circumstances not wholly unimpudent.

I speak, of course, of criticism, not of mere journalistic reporting. That there should be no place in these or any other theaters for mere journalistic reporting is altogether too clear to everyone (save possibly the editors of the newspapers) here to require argument. To report the result of a first night performance, particularly on Broadway, is to report a murder in terms of the flowers placed by relatives on the deceased's coffin. Every such first night is a bouncing success. The sedulously trained usher clique, the passionate ambassadors from the Lambs' Club, the actors and actresses out of work who have got in free and who, either because they feel applause is therefore expected of them or because they once acted with one of the actors and, though feeling him a shrimp in the art, yet deem it but in accord with the corps colours that they lustily clap him, so bang their palms off—go to constitute what must by the honest reporter be termed "an enthusiastic audience." I have been going now professionally to the theater in New York for more than twelve years and I tell but the simple truth when I say that in all that time I have, with but a single exception, never once attended the opening of any play, however bad, whereat the congregation was not clamorously encomiastic. To report premières by such tokens is, therefore, to report so many corpulent fabrications. And not to report première performances by such tokens is to take a step toward decent dramatic criticism.

And to take such a step toward decent dramatic criticism is to make oneself, as I shall attempt to show, even more inappropriate and exotic to the surroundings.

Mr. Clayton Hamilton, who is a married man and consequently has much more time to figure out such things than I have, has deduced that, in a Broadway season, but one play in every twenty-three is worth even a portion of afterthought and that, so, "a person of intelligence and taste who casually takes a chance on going to a play is likely, twenty-two times out of twenty-three, to have his intelligence insulted and his taste offended." Allowing for Mr. Hamilton's somewhat overly elaborate bull-fiddlings upon the words "intelligence" and "taste," the substance of his findings remains still intact and of an infectious probity. In the last half dozen years, I doubt if there have been more than five or six plays out of all the many hundred-odd presented in each season that have merited approach by the critic seriously interested in drama. The rest? Trick melodramas, fussy farces, mob mush, leg shows. A few of them amiable enough pastime—as kissing the maid or becoming wistfully alcoholic is amiable pastime—but certainly not approaching to an art calling for sober thought and criticism. Where there is no art, there is no call for criticism. It is as ridiculous to write criticism of a drama by Mr. George V. Hobart as it is to write criticism of the moving pictures. (The latter are the result of a circumspect elimination of the principal attributes of four of the arts and a clever synthesis of the scum: they have removed style from literature, speech from drama, colour from painting, form and the third dimension from sculpture).

The theater managers are, therefore, so far as I am able to make out, not only clearly justified, but absolutely merciful, in barring critics from their houses if so they choose. Why a hard-working, obtuse manager with a wife and several children and a chorus girl to support, should have his livelihood

imperilled by a dramatic critic who, however otherwise well-educated and well-trained, probably doesn't know whether the sound of galloping horses is reproduced by hollow cocoanuts or scooped-out canteloupe, is a problem to confound any fair-minded man. The manager is, self-confessedly, a tradesman. Why I, or any other critic, should be permitted by him to chase away his customers is no clearer to me than why the same manager, or any other manager, should be permitted by me to hang around the newsstands and chase away prospective buyers from the newsstand impresarios of publications containing my criticisms—of the manager.

The manager whose stage is quite frankly given over to yokel-yankers should promptly invite all critics out of his theater. But no. What actually does he do? He bids the critic sit upon his article, having so insinuated in advance to the critic that the aforesaid article is a drama worthy of the critic's consideration, and then, when subsequently the critic tells the truth about the article, he froths at the mouth, sputters, writes letters to the landlord of the critic's gazette and bids the critic thenceforth begone from his show-house gate. I personally have enjoyed such romantic adventures, even as have numerous of my colleagues. Several years ago, you will recall, I was invited by the management of the institution to write my impressions of the Princess Theater as an American Antoine *et Guignol*. I wrote them. Promptly the management responded with an emotional brochure to my friend and financial manager, Mr. John Adams Thayer. Having derived a good belly-laugh out of the *papier*, Thayer, being an unselfish fellow, despatched it by Roscoe, the office lad, to my chambers that I, too, might profit of its mirth. And I, being not less of generous heart, subsequently printed the libretto for the delectation of my readers. I had written merely what seemed to me to be wrong with the conduct of the Princess stage, an opinion not long afterward substan-

tiated by the sudden explosion of the enterprise, a stupid and unnecessary failure. Hence the pardonable questions: (1) Why was I, a professional critic, invited to write the truth about the Princess Theater and (2) why, when I did so, did my hosts seek to take me to task?

Last year, upon being invited by Mr. Joseph Brooks to review a performance by Miss Phyllis Neilson-Terry and to record my impressions of the lady's talents, I wrote (having already observed the lady's antics through an half dozen London seasons) that the lady in point was a fourth-rate performer and one quite apparently maladroit and rudderless. Whereupon Mr. Joseph Brooks, his illusions evidently somewhat annoyed, invited me into his auditoriums no more. Until this last month, that is. Again was I bidden, why I know not, to inspect the workings of the same fourth-rate actress in a piece called "The Great Pursuit"—and again, in all honesty, I found the fourth-rate actress to be quite as convincingly fourth-rate as she was the season before and the seasons before that. And (belated 'tis true) the majority of my colleagues found—and wrote—the very same thing. The question that currently disturbs my slumbers is, therefore, this: Will Mr. Brooks now exclude me from his auditoriums once again—and with me, the majority of my colleagues—or will he hie himself into an umbilicular contemplation and doze to the conclusion, albeit mayhap reluctant, that when I wrote the original criticism which earned his ill will, I wrote simply what at the time seemed to me an eminently well-studied, careful and equitable opinion—although, alas and unfortunately, a not sweet one—that my motive was merely the usual and incomplex motive of serving, as best I humbly may, the causes of a respectable American stage and its drama, and that, had he at the time viewed me possibly less as a Villista or Hohenzollern and more as a favourer who was trying to help him and, by helping him, so too the producing theater to which he is a

party, he might not only have rid our stage of another hypocritically glazed British facemaker, but also—and this will now indubitably capture him with a more benign magnetism—might have saved himself a lot of money?

Hall Caine's cheap melodrama, "Margaret Schiller," produced in the New Amsterdam Theater by the Messrs. Klaw and Erlanger, elicited, almost without exception, the combined and deserved snickery of the reviewers. And, shortly afterward, its withdrawal was made necessary. Yet what the attitude of Mr. Erlanger toward the very critics he had invited to express an opinion on the piece? I have been privileged a glance at one of the gentleman's *billets-doux*, addressed to the proprietor of the journal of one of the critics, and I quote therefrom a sentiment: "Hall Caine is one of the greatest writers living, and who is (naming the critic) to say he isn't? (Again naming the critic) ought to stop criticizing and go to sweeping the streets!" Need I go on? What chance in our theater does dramatic criticism of an intelligent gender or drama stand with such an attitude behind it?

Yet assuredly such a species of criticism should have a place in our theater. God knows, our theater needs it! What of a theater in which the leading manager believes—and doubtless honestly—that Hall Caine is a great writer? What of a theater whose dean of playwrights, so regarded and hailed, cabbages without credit a tale out of Guy de Maupassant and exploits it as his own under the caption of "Rio Grande"? What of a theater whose leading actress, so proclaimed, is accorded that august rank and the added laurel of intellectuality by virtue of the fact that she cartoons her every comedy role and declines to submerge this great and aloof intellectual personality of hers in her, with one exception, every dramatic role—an actress who, in any other country under the civilized sun, would be named a caricaturist? What of a theater whose leading histrionic guest at and celebrant of the Shakespearean festival displays

his critical powers thus in a volume called "Thoughts and After-Thoughts": "I contend that 'Henry VIII' is not a symbolic play"! And thus: "As, however, this play (Maeterlinck's 'Les Aveugles') contains thirteen characters, of which twelve are blind, it would be superfluous to discuss it as an acting drama"! I reveal but two sample gems.

The truth of the matter, however, is that, to a not inconsiderable degree, the American theater has taken its place alongside the honk-a-tonk, the cabaret, the Midway Plaisance. Where, now, its one time dignity, its importance? Once—and not so long ago—a place of amusement, recreation and stimulation for ladies and gentlemen, it has, with a few noteworthy exceptions, become a sort of stamping-ground for the culling of membership to Broadway dancing clubs, a place of labour for moving picture actors temporarily out of work, a clearing-house for the lack-lustre dramatic imaginings of hack novelette writers and ex-actors. The charm that was the theater, even ten years ago, where is it now? Small wonder such a critic as Huneker could not be dragged into a theater to-day with a team of oxen and the promise of a quart of Michelow. Small wonder such men as Reamer and Hammond and Mantle and Sherwin and Sayler have ceased to take the thing as anything but a low joke.

And so I say that, under the circumstances, the present-day manager is not only astute, but entirely justified, in his barring of this or that possibly somewhat too intelligent commentator from his theater. True, such barring would still leave a sufficient supply of critics on the job, at least in New York; but perfection is a part of few schemes.

Mr. William A. Brady, a vastly more perspicacious fellow than some like to believe, not long ago remarked to me that he himself did not understand why people longer give a continental about the theater as we have it on Broadway. Mr. Winthrop Ames, rather than assist in the further corruption of the national taste by producing more of the Broadway slop-dramaturgy, has preferred to

keep his theater dark throughout the entire season. Mr. John D. Williams, sickened by the pish put out on the Broadway stages week in and week out, put on Galsworthy's "Justice" in order, as he expressed it, that he might personally enjoy at least one respectable piece of dramatic writing before the year ended. And after Williams had dug down into his own pocket and got the play ready for production, it was only after great difficulty (he believed for a time he would have to abandon the enterprise altogether) that he could obtain a New York theater for its exhibition. "The public don't want such gloomy stuff," observed the stenographers who had been sent to Baltimore by the Messrs. Dillingham, et al., to report on the play; and it was only the sympathy of Messrs. Cohan and Harris that stood between the Galsworthy drama and the storehouse. Mr. George Tyler said to me, less than three-quarters of a year ago, that never in the history of the American theater has public taste been at anything like the low ebb it is at present. "And never, as a consequence," he continued, "has the general grade of dramatic fare been of so mean a calibre. The reason is not far to seek, for there are today a mere handful of managers and producers who are interested in the theater, who love the theater, who respect the theater. It was not so in other days. True enough, a manager may love the theater and have, at the same time, a respectable eye to the box-office. But today, with a few exceptions, a manager's love never gets nearer the theater as an institution than the sill across which his treasurer sells tickets—to Tyson."

There are managers and there are managers. It never has been and probably never will be necessary for the Bradys, the Ameses, the Williamses, the Hopkinesses, the Cohans and Harrises and the Tylers to go officially into the critic-barring business.

And yet—let us be fair—there are occasions when even such managers as these would be doing the drama a pretty

service were they to exclude from certain of their representations critics (albeit fellows intelligent, honest and discerning so far as they go) of a grown exceeding common species. I allude, of course, to the type of critic of the school headed by the late Mr. William Winter, the critic who regards and appraises every dramatic offering, however intrinsically with or without merit, from the plane of provincial morality. Had I been Mr. A. H. Woods, I should have excluded from my theater, upon my presentation of Mr. Sheldon's admirable dramatization of Sudermann's "Song of Songs," at least two metropolitan professional play reviewers who are notoriously infected with an obstreperous blue-nosed hostility to any play that voices a philosophy more daring than that of "The Cinderella Man." Such critics are a menace not only to the manager, but to the public. And so, too, might my sympathies have been found with the Shuberts when their presentation of a clever Viennese satiric farce comedy—incidentally spoiled in adaptation—was denounced by several of my horrified spinster colleagues on grounds of a shoddy Anglo-OHio morality. Not indecency, mind! That is, patently, a considerably different thing. Had I been in the Messrs. Shuberts' place, such putz-pomade dispensers would henceforth have been promptly siberiad.

Excepting "Fair and Warmer," an excellent farcical entertainment, "The Boomerang," a trivial but highly amusing little thing, a dramatization of "Treasure Island" and of the "Potash & Perlmutter" stories (all somewhat strictly removed from contemplative criticism), and such pieces as "Major Barbara," "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," "The Weavers," "The New York Idea," et cetera, all of which have already long been intimately familiar to the critic of drama, what the number of plays presented in New York during the entire season of 1915-1916 worth a moment's time or serious consideration by the sort of man who doesn't buy his neckwear in a grocery store?

Probably five—and two of the five little things in one act. These five: Galsworthy's "Justice," Brighouse's "Hobson's Choice" and Ballard's "Young America"—with the one-actors, "The Clod," by Lewis Beach and Donal Hamilton Haines, and Philip Moeller's "Helena's Husband," both the latter exhibited by amateurs in the Bandbox Theater.

Besides these, what else?

Saving a piece or two with an interesting and very lonesome character or an interesting and equally lonesome scene, a vasty panorama of "What Money Can't Buys," "Moonlight Marys," "Kings of Nowhere," "Margaret Schillers," "Greatest Nations," "The Chiefs," "Ware Cases," "Eternal Magdalenes," "Mrs. McChesneys," "Mark of the Beasts," "Sherman Was Rights," "Two Virtues," "Houses of Glass," "Roads to Happiness," "Some Babys," "Mr. Myd's Mysteries," "Cousin Lucy," "Under Fires." . . .

And such things, visited more lately upon the community, as Mr. Augustus Thomas' "Rio Grande" and a piece called "The Co-respondent," by the Misses Pollock and Weiman. Let us briefly sample this giddy brace.

In "Rio Grande," The Dean has done for "American army life on the Mexican border" (to quote the billing) all that The Wizard, in "The Heart of Wetona," has done for "the American Indian of today." Just as The Wizard took a play dealing with a Puritanic Anglo-Saxon community and converted it into an Indian drama by the simple trick of substituting feathers and Stetsons for aigrettes and Truly Warners, so now has The Dean lifted a *conte* from De Maupassant and metamorphosed it into an American army drama by the even more tidy trick of substituting a Casey for a Raoul and a reference to Carranza for one to the Bois de Boulogne.

The Dean, in the resultant play, discloses himself as living strictly up to form. That is to say, his technique is so perfect that it completely obscures his drama. Every exit and entrance,

every *pince-nés* that is to be broken at a critical moment, every bandage that is to be found germ-infected and cause a character's demise, is planted with a so crafty assiduity that, once the first half of the preparation is done with, nothing remains but to hang around and watch the plants work. True, pastime may be found the while giving ear to such of The Dean's lofty pundits' soupçons as "the chemistry of motivation," "the chemistry of things spiritual," and the like, and to The Dean's seriously intended love scenes wherein the hero informs the heroine, in voice a-thrill with fervour, that she is "an angelic, delectable baby" (the quotation is literal!), yet, in the main, the evening reveals itself as a mere lecture by The Dean on "How To Write A Play," a laboratorial evening proving to the further satisfaction of the students of Mr. William T. Price and other such wise p'fessors (as Harris Merton Lyon calls them) that, with protracted schooling and practice, one may become sufficiently proficient in what is termed dramatic technique to write anything for the stage but drama.

"Rio Grande" is not only technically of the vintage of the old Daniel Frohman stock company dramaturgy (see "Justice," for contrasting example; or Schnitzler's "Bernhardi," or a play of Shaw's; or Hauptmann, the Russians, Wedekind, Brieux or anyone else who today amounts to anything dramatically), but is also otherwise a product of the days of "The Conquerors" and Captain Charles King. I exaggerate, surely. The play, indeed, is of a stage epoch much, much earlier, for it but gives us once again the bald triangle of young wife, old husband, young lover. Even The Dean's assignment of title to the characters follows to the letter the rules of the stereotyped so-called military play. The husband is the colonel; the young lover, the lieutenant. The piece, in short, is a thing of the showshop of 1890, a thing of spick and span puttees and uniforms sprinkled with talcum to bespeak long cavalry rides, a thing of startled "You—

wouldn't — dare's I" and imperious "Go's I", a harlequinade in khaki. Why, at the conclusion of the affair, the Empire Theater orchestra should be made to play the national anthem and so hoist an audience to its feet to do patriotic homage to the spectacle of the young wife of a colonel in the United States Army being seduced by a lieutenant in the United States Army—is—despite the young wife's evident initial delight in the affair—a matter of taste the quality of which I should like some appropriate person to explain to me.

The second bijou, "The Co-respondent," sparkles similarly with lack of wit and inventiveness. Here, a selection from the fifteen-centers; a yarn alternately to paralyze and make warm the native *midinette*; a *märchen* to brew the tear in the eye of the local *rootbiermädchen*. A country maiden, daisy-eyed and shy, so goes the tale, is lured by a villain of modish air and unimaginable wealth into a mock marriage. Did I say mock marriage? Well, well, the excitement of the narrative is upon me and I go too fast. For ere the mock marriage can soil the purity of the country maiden is the scoundrel's perfidy penetrated by her. The years pass and is now the little maiden a newspaper reporter in the big city of New York. The editor of the newspaper, a magnificent creature, loves the little maiden and proves his love by giving her what she most desires, the chance to win fortune and nation-wide fame by reporting a large divorce scandal to the extent of a column. Great now is the joy of the maiden; yet, alas, for sweet hopes. Such is the way of the cruel world that it is she herself who is disclosed as the co-respondent named in the case; for the gentleman sued is none other than the low rogue who, those years before, had sought to rob her of her maidenly all.

A bouncing novelette, as one will readily detect. A backstairs fiction to jounce the Bridgets. The commentator who would apply the arts of dramatic criticism to such a thing would read the editorials in the *New York Herald*.

But public taste is another matter. Public taste, in the United States of America in this year of Our Lord Nineteen Hundred Sixteen, has—let us not forget—established a Mr. Francis X. Bushman, beyond all contention, as the national ideal of manly beauty, has sold 345,000 copies of the "Pollyanna" books, has put bows on the backs of alpine hats, and has made the profession of kicking people in the hind quarters worth a salary of \$450,000 a year, plus a handsome royalty guarantee.

* * *

To return, then, to dramatic criticism.

The theory, favourite of theatrical managers, actors and a certain species of playwright, that criticism should ever, even when of soundly adverse content, be of gentle and ladylike mien, is nonsense pure and simple. To accomplish its end, criticism, when seeking to correct an evil, should and must be hard, unflinching. To inject an alloy of honeysuckle into such criticism is but to inject into it personal feeling. It is not necessary or fitting that the surgeon, knife ready, first kiss his lady patient, however much the lady patient may be reassured by the act.

And not merely is this true in the case of dramatic criticism; it is even truer in the commoner appraisal of purely theatrical materials. Such an actor, for example, as the one in a recent exhibit at the Booth Theater who pronounced it "seckatary" should be consigned promptly to the firing squad. No additional evidence of the fellow's treachery should be required. Anyone so incompetent in his profession as to

be guilty of so unsightly a misdemeanor, however intrinsically trivial, should expect small consideration. Such a playwright, for instance, as one in the position of Mr. Thomas who in the last act of his most recent theatrical piece causes an off-stage military band to play the conventional funeral march at a soldier's grave and then, not two minutes afterward, in order to lighten the gloom and afford an accompaniment to a happy ending, has the same off-stage band strike up a quick-step ere the corpse has settled securely in its hole, should expect even less consideration.

True enough, such duties are not altogether pleasant. It is a not particularly jolly profession which calls upon its practitioner to prick the artistic pretences of gentlemen who, outside their labours, are doubtless excellent and convivial souls, and of ladies who, outside their stage anticings, are doubtless good wives and mothers. But the critic has naught to do with such meditations. I myself, for example, am personally not at all a bad sort of fellow. Really. Yet having on one occasion published a book which failed to satisfy my own critical demands, I felt honestly compelled to write and print (under a pseudonym) a criticism of both the book and myself, the which perfectly just criticism, upon subsequent reading, impressed me as exceedingly harsh and unfriendly—if not, indeed, positively vicious.

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Note to Three Anonymous Correspondents

Certainly, Nos. 17 and 19 are one. See No. 8 and behave!



A SOUL'S ADVENTURES

By H. L. Mencken

§ 1

THE New Fiction.—A fellow of naif and believing habit, despite the uric acid diathesis, I was bemused into looking for a grand crop of masterpieces of fiction by the Spring announcements of the publishers. Not a few of them, indeed, ascended to specific promises: they had new novels on the press that reduced "Barry Lyndon" to feebleness and "Jennie Gerhardt" to downright imbecility. The ensuing reviews in the newspapers bore out this extremely favorable prognosis; for a month or two, at the height of the merchanting (and advertising), another heaven-kissing genius was hymned every day. But an inspection of the actual books, alas, blew up my sweet anticipations. What I found in nine-tenths of these *chefs-d'œuvre*, painfully wading through them, was not originality, not a sense of beauty, not the profound study of man, but merely the old superficiality and sentimentality, the old salvo of rubber-stamps, the old guff. The Spring novels, in brief, turned out to be Spring novels and no more, and I contemplate the stack of them to-day with sincere apologies to my eyes.

Consider, for example, "Just David," by Eleanor H. Porter (*Houghton-Mifflin*), author of "Pollyanna," that favorite sugar-teat of yesteryear. Here we have a frank return to the style of the Sunday-school books of fifty years ago—the style so ferociously burlesqued by Mark Twain in "The Story of a Good Little Boy." The thing, in truth, is almost unbelievably silly; it is quite impossible to imagine sane adults snuffing over such ludicrous rubbish.

150

The hero, *aet. ten*, is on the one hand so innocent that he can't differentiate between sleep and death and is quite unconscious of evil, and on the other hand so gifted that he speaks French and German fluently and improvises on the violin with the facility of a Joachim. The orthodox "Oh, sirs" and "Oh, thank you, sirs" are forever in his mouth; he has a talent for mellifluousness and addresses the women who pet him in such terms as "O Lady of the Roses"; he reunites separated lovers and amazes the yokels of his habitat with flights of transcendental poetry; the bad boys of the vicinage try to assassinate him—unluckily, in vain!—he is a saccharine, sticky amalgam of the Good Angel, Cinderella, Herbert Kaufman, the infant Mozart (of the celebrated picture), Henry Van Dyke and Florence Nightingale. That so obvious and silly a piece of tear-squeezing should be taken seriously, even by sedentary and love-crossed fat women, is, as I have said, almost unimaginable. And yet, as everyone knows, books of this same garrulous mushiness are printed in the United States by the score, and publishers of decent position put their imprints on them and advertise them as Great Fiction, and they are praised lavishly in the newspapers as full of Optimism, Gladness and Human Nature, and the women's clubs sob and slobber over them, and pale divines preach on them, and they arise from the book-counters in huge stacks. What is to be thought of a literature which produces such scented piffle? What is to be thought of a nation which swallows it with sober gusto?

Put beside so empty a mess of bosh,

such a bouncing boob-tickler as E. Phillips Oppenheim's "An Amiable Charlatan" (*Little-Brown*) takes on a considerable probability, and even a touch of literary consideration. This Oppenheim, in fact, is a good deal better than he is commonly painted; at his worst, he always manages to draw a satisfying scoundrel or two, and his writing is often very fair. Much the same half-skill is visible in "The Curved Blades," by Carolyn Wells (*Lippincott*), a detective story with the usual murder mystery; and in "The S. S. Glory," by Frederick Niven (*Doran*), the tale of a thrilling trip across the Atlantic in a cattle-boat; and in "Behind the Bolted Door," by Arthur E. McFarlane (*Dodd-Mead*), another detective story; and in "The Least Resistance," by Kate L. McLaurin (*Doran*), a chronicle of stage life with a tragic ending; and in "Exile," by Dolf Wyllarde (*Lane*), a melodrama with its scenes laid in a far-flung outpost of the British Empire. So, too, one finds a certain readability, though precious little else, in three current romances of the Far West, to wit, in "The Phantom Herd," by B. M. Bower (*Little-Brown*), "The Shadow Riders," by Isabel Paterson (*Lane*), and "The Heart of Thunder Mountain," by Edfrid A. Bingham (*Little-Brown*). All of these confections, with the possible exception of Miss McLaurin's, will be dead and forgotten long before we go back to medicated flannels, but they at least reveal an occasional mark of respect for the reader's intelligence.

It is possible to say the same for Mrs. Atherton's latest offering, "Mrs. Belfame" (*Stokes*), but no more. In plan it is a very conventional mystery story, with the blame laid upon a woman who is innocent in fact, though guilty in intent. The actual culprit, in the end, turns out to be a suffragette. Not the slightest ingenuity is shown in the working out of this banal plot; its machinery is absolutely true to type, and its people include the inevitable stupid policemen, impertinent newspaper reporters and gloating neighbors. There

is even a standard-model deathbed confession in the last chapter. Nevertheless, the publishers announce the book with a deafening blast of trombones, and argue gravely that it is "the only modern story in which crime and mystery are combined with a high order of literary merit." More, they break out with the modest doctrine that Mrs. Atherton is "the ablest American novelist," and quote such authorities as Sir W. Robertson Nicoll and the Hon. William H. Taft in support of it. The *Review of Reviews* is also put upon the witness stand; it compares the fair author to George Eliot, George Sand and Mme. de Staél. Here we have a match for the theory, so lately promulgated by another firm of zealous Barabbases, that Irvin S. Cobb's "Speaking of Operations—" is "the funniest book we know of." Surely the news that Mrs. Atherton leads all the rest will be surprising to the admirers of the ancient but still sportive William Dean Howells, and to those of Mrs. Wharton, not to mention those of Dreiser and the late Frank Norris. Moreover, when this astounding award of bays was made, Henry James was still alive. . . . Read publishers' announcements if you would enjoy a refined dissipation! They are vastly more imaginative and amusing than the works of their authors! . . .

More harmless but hollow stuff. "Babette," by F. Berkeley Smith, (*Double-day-Page*), is a stupid and cheaply sentimental romance, the scenes laid in France, with an astoundingly hideous chromo by Oliver Herford as its frontispiece. I have found it quite impossible to get to the end by the lawful route, but by skipping two hundred pages I discover, not much to my surprise, that the rascally M. Pierre Ravreau has given over his evil courses and married Mlle. Babette Pivot, and that they have a little Babette aged five, and that they are happy. In "The Fifth Wheel," by Olive Higgins Prouty (*Stokes*), we encounter a social butterfly who takes to the suffrage; in "Adam's Garden," by Nina Wilcox Putnam (*Lippincott*), we have another

(this time male) who takes to adventure and amour. Two very dull novels. "The Blind Men's Eyes," by William McHarg and Edwin Balmar (*Little-Brown*), is merely one more mystery story. "Beggars on Horseback," by F. Tennyson Jesse (*Doran*), is a collection of mediocre short stories. "Instead of the Thorn," by Clara Louise Burnham (*Houghton-Mifflin*), is another piece of solferino taffy. "Behold the Woman!" by T. Everett Harré (*Lippincott*), is a sweet mixture of voluptuousness and piety—the very stuff to shock and enchant the lady Brandeses and Brunetières. "The Light That Lies," by George Barr McCutcheon (*Dodd-Mead*), is a tale in which love invades the jury box, and is written with skill and vivacity, as Mr. McCutcheon's endless best-sellers always are. "The Sentimental Dragon," by Nina Larrey Duryea (*Doran*), and "Mr. and Mrs. Pierce," by Cameron Mackenzie (*Dodd-Mead*), are two stories of social striving, neither getting very far, but both readable. "The Bars of Iron," by Ethel M. Dell (*Putnam*), is the history of a gentleman who falls in love with the widow of the gentleman he has killed. "A Hero of Our Time," by M. Y. Lermontov (*Knopf*), is a Russian novel of very old-fashioned cut, with a Byronic superman for its hero. . . . I draw the veil. A full catalogue of the Spring trade goods would only bore you.

§ 2

Better Fables.—Various novels of a greater pretension follow, but even here I find little that is inspiring. One of the best of them is "The Buffoon," by Louis U. Wilkinson (*Knopf*), a story that is somewhat talky at the start, but that soon settles down to a sharp and excellent character study. Its pictures of intellectual society in London are full of a devastating humor; Wilkinson does on a large scale what Willard Huntington Wright barely blocked out in "The Man of Promise." But his chief virtue, like Wright's, lies in

his point of view rather than in his actual assembling of materials. He sees life ironically; he is a wit and a satirist; later on, I make no doubt, he will be a novelist to take into very serious account. Another sound piece of writing is to be found in "Green Mansions," by W. H. Hudson (*Knopf*), a romance of the Demarara *hinterland*. It is introduced by a foreword by John Galsworthy, in which Hudson is hailed as "a very great writer . . . the most valuable our age possesses." Not many readers, I fear, will be disposed to go with Galsworthy so far. Without question, Hudson is a stylist of considerable talents, and without question some of his pictures of the tropical forest are extraordinarily rich in beauty, but to me, at least, his story is only faintly interesting, and ranged beside even the second-best of Joseph Conrad it at once shows its limitations.

Other workmanlike books which still fall far short of the first contemporary merit are "The Rudder," by Mary S. Watts (*Macmillan*); "Children of Hope," by Stephen Whitman (*Century*); "John Bogardus," by George Agnew Chamberlain (*Century*); "The Little Lady of the Big House," by Jack London (*Macmillan*); "The Amateur," by Charles G. Norris (*Doran*), and "Her Husband's Purse," by Helen R. Martin (*Doubleday-Page*). Mrs. Watts' story, like "Van Cleve" and "The Rise of Jennie Cushing," deals with life in Cincinnati and is done with all her customary vivacity, but I find it much less interesting than the others, despite a couple of very brilliant character sketches. The Whitman story, though extremely well written, is also disappointing, for it represents Whitman's abandonment of realism for what seems to be an imitation of the sentimental humor of W. J. Locke. So with London's "The Little Lady of the Big House." London, as I have often remarked, is a fictioneer who pursues his craft with almost Prussian thoroughness; there is nothing about the manufacture of popular novels that he doesn't know. But here he tries to en-

tertain us with a superman who, in the last analysis, fails to convince, and so the product of all his skill is only tediousness. So again with "John Bogaardus" and "The Amateur," the first the chronicle of a college professor who, after many psychical storms and alarms, settles down to Service, and the second the tale of a young artist's adventures, professional and amorous, in New York. These are well-meaning stories; they are written seriously and with due respect for the reader; but they miss force and gusto; they leave an impression of flatness. "The Conquest," by Sidney L. Nyburg (*Lippincott*), is even worse. This Nyburg, a year or two ago, published a book of very respectable short stories, but in this, his first novel, he runs aground on the Uplift, and his lawyer-hero, at the end, seems a vacant and silly fellow.

Here, perhaps, I yield to prejudice. The uplifter, whether in or out of fiction, is a fowl whose plumage sets me to swearing. I know too much about his ways and means to have any belief in him, or any love for him, or any respect for him. He is, when honest, little more than an ignorant and cocksure dunderhead, and when cured of honesty, the most insidious and dangerous rogue that this fair republic of rogues has yet produced. . . . Call it prejudice if you will. Criticism itself, at bottom, is no more than prejudice made plausible. The judicial temperament, like moral beauty, is merely a phrase that men use to fool themselves. When I put on my hangman's gown of criticism and buckle on my celluloid sword, I make a mental oath that I will be as fair, as honest and as charitable as any judge on the bench. I succeed, like the judge, in being as fair, as honest and as charitable as any lawyer at the Bar.

§ 3

Good Short Stories.—The best of the Spring fiction, when all is said and done, is to be found in two books of short stories—"The River of Life," by Alexander Kuprin (*Luce*), and "Stam-

boul Nights," by H. G. Dwight (*Double-day-Page*). Both are exotics, for Kuprin is a Russian and Dwight deals entirely with life in Turkey, in which country he has spent many years. It is a long while since these eyes have encountered better short stories than Kuprin's "Captain Ribnikov," the tale of a Japanese spy, or Dwight's "The House of the Giraffe." The former lifts itself enormously above the common run of spy stories, now so popular among lovers of tin-pot melodrama. It concerns itself, not with the objective work of the spy, but with the subtle effects of that work upon his innermost soul. It has sharp glances in it, and intimate revelations; the man, at the end, is astonishingly real. The other tales in Kuprin's volume fall a good deal below this one, but taken together they still show plainly that he is a man of genuine talents, and thus greatly above the jitney Russian geniuses who are being forever introduced with such gaudy encomiums. The fashion for Cossackian pathology will presently die out, but I believe that some of the work of Kuprin, along with the best of Andrieff and Gorky, will survive it.

"The House of the Giraffe" is a somewhat elaborate character study of a Turkish functionary of the old régime—a milk-brother of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and hence a personage of high privileges in Constantinople. Among those privileges is a sort of *droit de seigneur*, whereby this gallant Nousret Pasha honors the wives of his acquaintances with his favor. The story deals with his pursuit of such a pleasant affair, and of the catastrophe which overtakes it and him when dear old Brother Abdul Hamid is suddenly deposed. The color is brilliantly laid on; the Turkey of yesterday becomes not only gorgeous, but even understandable. Excellent writing is also to be found in "The Glass House," in "In the Pasha's Garden," and, above all, in "The Leopard of the Sea," the last an account of the comic opera voyage of a Turkish cruiser. To me, at least, the Turks are a people of much charm; they stand clear-

ly above Christian sentimentality, and have courage, masculinity and a sense of beauty. Not since Demetra Vaka's "Haremlik" have I read a book which dealt with them more sympathetically, or made their point of view more comprehensible.

§ 4

Printed Plays.—Of the current play books, the only one that interests me is "Plays of the Natural and the Supernatural," by Theodore Dreiser (*Lane*), a volume containing seven pieces, four of which have been printed in THE SMART SET. Of the seven, that which shows the best promise of popular success is "The Girl in the Coffin," a somewhat obvious piece of realism but with saving overtones. The four plays of the supernatural are: "The Blue Sphere," "Laughing Gas," "In the Dark," and "The Spring Recital." In each of them Dreiser tries to depict dramatically the blind, unintelligent, unintelligible forces which lie behind all human motives and acts. Superficially, they may seem to reveal an abandonment of his "chemic" theory for mysticism, but that seeming is only seeming. The two are really no more than diverse aspects of a single philosophy. That philosophy, like Joseph Conrad's, has for its central idea the fortuitousness and inexplicability of human life, and you will find it running unbrokenly through all of Dreiser's books, from "Sister Carrie" down to this last one. The criticism which deals only with externals often praises him for making Carrie Meeber so clear, for understanding her so well, but the truth is that his achievement in his study of her consists rather in making visible the impenetrable mystery of her, and of the vast complex of muddled striving and aspiration of which she is so helplessly a part. It is in this sense and not in the current critical sense that "Sister Carrie" is a profound work. It is not a book of glib explanations, of quasi-scientific cocksureness; it is, beyond all else, a book of wonder.

Dreiser's characteristic lack of technical cunning is plainly seen in some

of these plays. "The Girl in the Coffin," for example, is too long. Its content and doctrine would be better discerned if it were not so heavily blanketed with words. Again, "The Spring Recital" seems but half worked out, and "The Light in the Window," in more than one place, comes perilously close to banality. But these defects are more than made up for by the photographic observation shown in "Old Rag Picker" and by the disarming plausibility and impressiveness of "The Blue Sphere" and "In the Dark." If these pieces had been done by Maeterlinck or by some fantastic Russian, the noise of their celebrity would be filling the ears, but with Dreiser's name upon them, I doubt that they will arouse much enthusiasm among the lady critics, male and female, of our fair republic. These pious numskulls, in truth, seldom consider him as an artist; they almost always content themselves with belaboring him as an immoralist. The reviews of "The 'Genius'" themselves reviewed, would make a curious contribution to Puritan psychology, and if my health holds out, I may attempt its confection later on. The book was read with a salacious eye, as Sunday School boys read the Old Testament, and then denounced pontifically as naughty. I wonder what the smut hounds will find to shock them in his plays!

The remaining dramatic books need not detain us. "The Unchastened Woman," by Louis Kaufman Anspacher (*Stokes*) and "Quinneys," by Horace Annesley Vacheff (*Doran*), are popular pieces that the estimable Nathan has already noticed. "The Nameless One," by Anne Cleveland Cheney (*Stokes*), is a heavy attempt at a poetical drama. "The Technique of Play Writing," by Charlton Andrews (*Home*), is a labored effort to reduce one of the fine arts to the level of a somewhat feeble legerdemain. Such works, I daresay, find a ready market among the hordes of bank clerks, bartenders, sempstresses, locomotive engineers and vaudeville actors who bombard the poor managers with impossible scripts, and dream of rivalling Sardou, Theodore Kremer, George

Broadhurst and the late Charles Klein. Such naif aspirants have great faith in what they call "technique"; they believe that it may be acquired by reading a book by a man who lacks it himself. The same sort of public leaps to such absurd compositions as "The Universal Plot Catalogue," by Henry Albert Phillips (*Stanhope-Dodge*), a professor whose curious contributions to the literary art I have hitherto smothered with praise. As Phillips depicts it, writing a short story is as easy as slicing a *blutwurst*. So it is—if you want to write that sort of short story. Look through the 15-cent magazines, and you will find hundreds of them.

§ 5

Three Americans.—Three typical Americans, though at first blush each seems to stand miles apart from the other two, tell their stories in "An Autobiography," by Edward Livingston Trudeau (*Doubleday-Page*), "Notes of a Busy Life," by Joseph Benson Foraker (*Stewart-Kidd*), and "The Story of an American Singer," by Geraldine Farrar (*Houghton-Mifflin*). In all three of these self-chroniclings the quality dominantly revealed is audacity. Each is a tale, not of genius, but of mere unflagging hope and brilliance. Trudeau, broken in health and of almost incredibly meagre equipment otherwise, revolutionized the treatment of tuberculosis in America, saved thousands of useful lives, and made himself a world figure; Foraker, by sheer industry and alertness, forced himself to the very door of the White House; and the fair Geraldine, with a pretty face and an endless belief in herself, attained to such a celebrity at twenty-five that the opera-houses of Christendom were flooded with the tears of envious rivals, most of them vastly better singers. You will not find any false modesty in these books. Foraker and the Farrar boast unblushingly, and even Trudeau does not belittle his own achievements. But in each of them the story told is of interest enough to apologize for its lack of reticence, and the

character revealed is thoroughly American from head to heels.

Trudeau, I daresay, will be held in memory long after the other two are forgotten. Already, indeed, he begins to take on the proportions of a legendary and half-fabulous figure. And no wonder! With the body of a sick child, he spent thirty years fighting and conquering two great dragons—one the dragon of his own crushing illness, and the other and even greater, the dragon of suspicion and ignorance. All revolutionaries, medical or otherwise, have hard battles, but his was much harder than most, for the cure that he advocated involved patient submission to exposure and suffering for months and even years, and it was difficult to get recruits for the experiment, and twice as difficult to get medical approval of it. Nevertheless, Trudeau persisted, and bit by bit he won his way. It is curious to note how much even he himself took on trust. The open-air treatment for tuberculosis originated with two Germans, Brehmer and Dettweiler, and Trudeau appears to have adopted it on the strength of a brief notice or two in an English medical journal. Knowing no German, he was unable to consult the original reports, nor could he, later on, read the epoch-making announcement by Dr. Robert Koch of his discovery of the *tubercle bacillus*. He studied Koch's historic monograph in a rough English translation, made in a common copy-book and at the expense of a lay friend! The American medical journals of that time wholly neglected the subject. They printed nothing whatever about Brehmer's and Dettweiler's work, and so little about the new science of bacteriology that Trudeau had to seek the assistance of a German-trained colleague when he essayed to duplicate Koch's experiments. His story of his adventures in his improvised laboratory at Saranac makes one of the most interesting chapters of his book. . . . He lived to see his ideas accepted everywhere, and sanitariums springing up on all sides. Those ideas, at bottom, were borrowed;

the true pioneering was done across the water; but surely it was Trudeau who gave them their present wide validity and significance, and so turned them to the uses of humanity. He was, beneath his puny form, a first-rate man.

The Foraker book would have been better stuff had Foraker gone to less pains to depict himself as a democratic saint. His long career in politics, as the record shows, was anything but discreditable. A man of firmness and intelligence and an orator of ingratiating sweetness, he devoted himself, first and last, to combating the worst vagaries of a mobocracy on the loose, and particularly to war upon the quacks who sought to inflame and beguile it. This was a useful and honorable enterprise. His days in public office were the days of the dawn of the uplift; men with courage enough to speak out against it were rare; he was one of the few who remained steadfast to the end and accepted the extreme penalty. But now, instead of discussing frankly the plain evils of mob-rule, he seems eager to have himself thought of as a pious believer in it, and so his story acquires pecksnifian touches and is disappointing where it should be instructive. It is the story, in brief, not of a man who boldly offers a reasonable philosophy to account for his acts, regardless of its popularity, but of a man eager to make a good impression upon his inferiors. Here we come to the central defect of American politics, and the cause of our utter dearth of statesmen. Our politicians, even at their best, always keep their eyes on the newspapers and the mob; we have yet to produce one willing to disregard superficialities and tackle mob-rule head-on. They all disguise themselves as true believers, even when their acts show that they are not. . . . The Farrar's saucy chronicle I leave to your own enchanted inspection. It does full justice to her talents.

§ 6

Much in Little.—Have I ever advised you to lay in a set of "The

Everyman Encyclopedia" (*Dutton*)? If not, I do so now, and with full confidence that you will be delighted with the twelve little volumes that a few dollars will get for you. The trouble with all the larger encyclopedias, as practicable reference books, is that they are far too bulky and prolix. Going to them to ascertain some single name or fact or date, one is staggered by treatises that take hours, and sometimes even days, to read. The Everyman avoids that capital defect; its twelve volumes are of the size of the other books in the Everyman's Library, and their contents are admirably well-ordered, succinct and satisfying. I have used, in my time, all of the other encyclopedias in English, including the last edition of the *Britannica*, but I have now discarded them all in favor of the Everyman's. It answers a larger proportion of the questions that I ask of it, and more quickly and briefly, than any other. For detailed and technical information, of course, one must go elsewhere, but for the simple facts about what the preface calls "the affairs of everyday life" one need not proceed further. . . . Here and there, to be sure, errors and omissions are encountered, particularly in the articles on American topics. For example, Richard Croker is called "an American statesman," and there is no mention whatever of his leadership of Tammany Hall. Again, the *New York Tribune* is described as a five-cent paper, and then, quite absurdly, as "the pioneer of the half-penny paper, of which the *Daily Mail* is the English equivalent." Yet again, there are irritating slips of the pen, as when the *Canal du Drac* in France, which is 445 miles long, is said to "affect an area of 18,600 acres." Finally, there are certain serious weaknesses on the biographical side, and one gasps to find such a stupendous figure as Johann Muller, the founder of cellular pathology, given less space than any other Muller. . . . But those defects, after all, are not very numerous, and every other encyclopedia also shows them.

In the Shops of the Smart Set

By Renée

If you are interested in advance information, not only about fashions, but about the novel and useful things to be found in New York's best shops, you will read the following pages with pleasure and profit. We shall be glad to tell you where any of the articles mentioned in these pages can be found, or to purchase them for you. Address your inquiry to "In the Shops of the Smart Set," Printing Crafts Building, 38th St. & 8th Ave., New York City.

IT seems only a few weeks ago since the sudden arrival of warmer weather made furs impossible and lighter clothes imperative, yet before we have had time to recover from the usual dissatisfaction with everything we bought and to feel at home with the Spring styles, Summer has come, and with it the demand for another new wardrobe. As Summer means not only extremely warm weather, but the complete alteration of our list of social functions, and to some extent at least the substitution of country life for town life, this demand must be met by changes more extensive than those that have already taken place this year. So as long as we must be suitably and comfortably dressed for the coming season, there is nothing for it but to stop grumbling that Spring was late, and to prepare for the shopping tour.

SUMMER AFTERNOON CLOTHES

For such an affair as tea at the country club, is the net dress illustrated on this page. Its style is simple enough to be youthful, yet elaborate enough not to be out of place on an older woman. The lower half of the blouse and the upper half of the skirt are of pink net, and pink net also trims the collar and cuffs. The rest of the dress is white, heavy net covered cord finishes the edges of the skirts, to supply the weight the material itself lacks and to emphasize the extreme fulness. The price is \$24.50.



A POIRET FROCK

Much the same sort of purpose could be served by the dress of natural colored and blue tussah silk shown, as although the general character of it is more practical, and suited to morning wear, such things as the Poiret

collar and cuffs, the dainty embroidery of blue silk, and the fineness of the materials make it as suitable for afternoons. Plain natural colored tussah forms the loose French blouse, which is trimmed with an embroidery of old blue silk on the yoke and the pockets, and striped blue and white tussah to form the novel cuffs and the girdle. The skirt is of blue and white striped tussah, the stripes being arranged horizontally to add to the width. The price of this was \$29.50, and for \$16.50 there was a dress on much the same order, of the same materials, which had a square sailor collar and usual cuffs.

MORNING MILLINERY

A smart hat to be worn with this was seen in a large Fifth Avenue millinery shop. It was of black straw, extremely light, but closely enough woven to be shady, and it was trimmed with bands of striped corded silk around the brim and the crown, and a smoked pearl ornament in the front.

A SERVICEABLE SKIRT

Next to such clothes as these for teas, race meets, and other semi-formal occasions of the Summer season, sport things are of major importance. One of the hardest items to find is a good practical skirt, and that shown on page 159 was chosen for a number of reasons. It is cut on simple lines, yet its freedom from

such generally useless things as patch pockets, and the novel arrangements of the box plaits at the waist make it attractive enough to be a little more than a skirt to be used strictly for tennis matches and golf tournaments. The material is grey and white striped flannel, and the price is \$10.50.

SPORT ACCESSORIES

The blouse is of pale yellow handkerchief linen, and has a soft rolled collar and cuffs edged with very narrow frills of white linen. This cost \$5.95 in a shop which sells blouses exclusively, and there were others of the same style in rose and pale blue.

White leather soles are no longer a footwear novelty, but they continue to be popular on Summer shoes. They are so much more easily cleaned than shoes which have heels and soles in darker leather, and so much lighter and more attractive that this is only to be expected. A shoe shop on one of the cross streets

has a pair of these shoes in white buskskin, moderately heavy and laced, with low heels and thick soles which cost \$7.00 a pair.

SOME NEW COATS

A three-quarter length coat of checked velour, which was called a sport coat, but which could be used on a



number of different occasions was seen in a Fifth Avenue department store. The waist is high and belted with a narrow band of self material, and the sleeves are puffed, fitted into a slightly dropped shoulder, and finished with narrow white cuffs. The same coat was shown in rose, blue, and green velour, and the price of it was \$29.50.

MADAGASCAR GRASS WORK

At this time of the year there seems to be no end to the buying of house-furnishings. After the business of buying presents for the brides of the post-Lenten season, came that of furnishing the new homes, and now those of us who have a place in the country, and even those who open a bungalow out of town for the Summer months have to think of the hundred and one new items of furniture that will be necessary. Some novel bungalow curtains which are cool and attractive, and have the additional advantage of not becoming easily soiled, are made of woven Madagascar grass, in natural colors and in dyed reds, greens and blues. They are very long, and most of them are in tan ornamented with a plain colored border. Each curtain cost \$1.25, and to match these were pillows of the same grass. That shown in the illustration is of a tan and green plaid design and was priced at \$1.50. It is stuffed with silk floss, and besides the comfort and the attractive appearance of it, it is said to be able to stand being dampened without injury—an important merit, considering these cushions are intended mostly for porch use.

CHINA FOR THE SUMMER BUNGALOW

The china to be used in the Summer bungalow is always somewhat of a problem, and it is often difficult to obtain a set which is not too expensive, and yet is tasteful and attractive. A Japanese shop on Fifth Avenue is showing several varieties of Ninsie ware, and amongst the tea-sets, the most striking was one which sold for \$6.75 and is illustrated on page 160. The design is in daisy pattern, slightly raised, and



colored with yellow, brown, and green. There were fifteen pieces to the set, including a teapot with a handle in bamboo, a cream jug, a sugar bowl, and six cups and saucers.

Another piece of Ninsie ware, which is shown in the same illustration, is a large shallow bowl, to be used in arranging flowers in Japanese style. The bowl itself is in cream color and the violet design is in purple and brown. The bowl cost \$1.75, and a frog in green china in the bottom of it cost 35c. Cherry blossom was fitted into the holes in the back of the china frog. The Japanese have a special symbolical way of arranging flowers in these, it is said, in which the stems generally take the form of a triangle to represent the sun, man, and the earth, but even with complete ignorance of these methods it is possible to obtain with such flat flower holders as this much prettier effects than can be produced by bunching flowers into a deep vase.

JAPANESE PLACE CARDS

The same Japanese store had some very attractive place cards which sold for sixty cents a box. They consisted of small cards, a little larger than the ordinary visiting card, and were hand painted in water colors. The designs were mostly Japanese scenes in soft greens and blues, but some were of animals, dragons, and dogs, in brighter colors. Considering the number of country club luncheons and such like affairs that take place in the summer, a box of these should be very desirable to most hostesses, especially as although the price of them is not at all high, they are so well done that they are much more attractive than one general run of hand-painted place cards.

PERFUMES AND POWDERS

A firm which has already had a great deal of success with its perfumes, has just introduced a new one which promises to be as popular as the rest. It is called "Mavis," after the song of that name, and just as Glebeas Inspiration stands for all its name implies, or Mary Garden perfume strives to express the personality of the opera singer or High Jinks to suggest a spirit of

No matter where you live, you can always avail yourself of the best that the New York shops have to offer through the shopping service of THE SMART SET. If you live in the City, you can save time by making use of this department, which is designed for the convenience of our readers. We will purchase anything for sale in New York City upon receipt of its retail price, or if the cost is unknown to you, we will price it and hold it for you until the requisite amount is received. Every article described in this department is guaranteed to be as represented. This shopping service is at your disposal free of charge.

joyousness, this new Mavis perfume is meant to convey an impression of simplicity—the sort of perfume one would expect to find on the dressing table of a young girl for whom the more complicated scents would be too subtle and sophisticated. The price of the essence is \$1.00 a bottle, and the toilet water is 75 cents. There are other preparations too, face powder, cold cream, etc., scented with the same perfume.

FOR THE COMPLEXION

The subject of toilet preparations brings to mind a greaseless cream which came to notice a short time ago. It is intended to be used for removing wrinkles and filling out hollows, and the directions say that it is to be applied at night and left on the face till morning. It is very daintily perfumed with lilac, and the price of a small jar is only 25 cents.

Something else for the complexion, but something to give it the appearance of having been improved, rather than serving to improve it, is a rouge which is made in a French establishment, just off upper Fifth Avenue. The dry rouge, a preparation for greasy and normal skins, is called Crushed Rose Leaves, and sells for 75c, and the Rouge en Creme which is intended for dry skins costs \$3.00.

